The Stranger as Newcomer

Genesis 15
13. And He said to Abram, Know for a certainty that your seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;

Genesis 23
4. I am a stranger and a sojourner with you; give me possession of a burying place with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight.

Exodus 2
22. And she bore him a son, and he called his name Gershom; for he said, I have been a stranger in a strange land.

Leviticus 19
33. And if a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not wrong him.

Psalms 119
19. I am a stranger on earth; do not hide your commandments from me.

YOUR BIBLE NAVIGATOR
1. See how the word "stranger" is used in each verse.
2. What makes people "strange"?
3. Can one feel strange in familiar surroundings? Bring one of the verses as a prooftext for your answer.
4. What makes you feel strange?
In the Talmud, they understand "stranger" to mean the same as "newcomer" i.e. someone who has chosen to join the community. In other words, someone who feels strange to the community but who wishes to belong.

Our Rabbis taught: He who wounds the feelings of a proselyte transgresses three negative commandments, and he who oppresses him transgresses two commandments. How does wounding their feelings differ from oppressing them?

We make this distinction because three separate negative commandments are stated: You shall not wrong a stranger [i.e., a proselyte] (Exodus 23:9) And if a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not wrong him (Leviticus 19:33), and you shall not therefore wrong each his fellowman (Leviticus 25:17) -- a proselyte being included in 'fellowman.'

If that’s the case then for ‘oppression’ there are also three commandments which prohibit this, "and you shall not oppress him" (Exodus 22:20), Also "You shall not oppress a stranger",(Exodus 23:9) and "[If you lend money to any of my people whom are of your poor,] you shall not take interest from him" (Exodus 22:24). which includes a proselyte!

— So, say instead, that both wounding feelings and oppressing are forbidden by three commandments.

It has been taught: R. Eliezer the Great said: Why did the Torah warn against [the wronging of] a proselyte in thirty-six, or as others say, in forty-six, places? Because he may revert back to his evil ways. What is the meaning of the verse, You shall neither wrong a stranger, nor oppress him; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt? It has been taught: R. Nathan said: Do not taunt your neighbour with the blemish you yourself have. And thus the proverb runs: If there is a case of hanging in a man's family record, say not to him, 'Hang this fish up for me.'

**YOUR TALMUD NAVIGATOR**
1. What are the reasons for giving the stranger (the proselyte) special consideration?
2. If stranger means proselyte, how do they understand the verse "You shall not aggrieve a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Exodus 22:20)

**Maimonides Hilchot Deot Chapter 6:4**
The love of the stranger who has entered beneath the wings of the Divine presence is enjoined by two Biblical commandments: One because he is considered to be within the category of "reyim" (a friend) and one because he is a stranger, and the Torah states: "And you shall love the stranger..." The Holy One commanded that we should love the stranger just as He commanded that we should love Him, as it is written: And you shall love the lord your God. The Holy One himself loves the stranger, as it is written: And He loves the stranger.

YOUR MAIMONIDES NAVIGATOR
1. Why all this emphasis on loving the stranger? Why is Maimonides so concerned?
2. Do you think Maimonides is drawing from the Talmudic piece we have learned?