

translate to “immigrant” OR “convert”. In the middle ages Rabbis interpreted ger as convert, so the Torah might be saying that you should treat converts to Judaism nicely INSTEAD of saying that Jews should treat all strangers well.

Because today the messages of the Torah are not always clear, I prefer to assume that my religion is instructing me to be kind to ALL strangers, and not just to Jews. It is important to always review our history and reflect on our actions so that we can learn from our mistakes.

In the past, Jews were not always welcomed to new communities in a kind way. And, it is this history that influenced Jewish culture and our ethics on welcoming strangers and helping others.

Around the world the treatment of Jews was frequently terrible. For example, . . .

In Spain, in 1492, the inquisition forced Jews to convert or be killed;

In 1508 German people were allowed to confiscate and destroy all Jewish books

In 1547 Jews weren't allowed to live in Russia at all;

In France, in 1615, King Louis XIII declared that all Jews had to leave or be killed;

Between 1622 and 1629 Persian Jews were forced to convert to Islam

In 1654 Jews were expelled from Brazil.

The treatment of Jews became so bad, that, in 1848, a German newspaper said that killing a Jew should be treated as a misdemeanor instead of a serious crime.

In the early 1900s there were Pogroms in Russia where they rounded up all the Jews and either killed them, beat them, and made them leave. My great great grandfather fled these Pogroms and spent 7 years traveling across China and Asia Koshering meat for Jewish communities. When he finally got to America he sent for the rest of his family, including my great grandma, Yetta Greenberg.

America is known as a country of immigrants. Today, according to the Pew Research Center, the U.S. has more immigrants than any other country in the world. In the past 25 years, the U.S. immigrant population doubled from 23 million to 46 million foreign born people. Our country hasn't always been perfect, and our current situation is very upsetting, but America has a pretty great culture around letting in strangers and being welcoming to everybody.

Nevertheless, it is more complicated than that.

Jews came to America to escape the harsh treatment they received in Europe, Russia, Brazil and other places, in hopes that their lives would improve. Some things were better when they arrived, but it wasn't perfect.

Books, school, and, yes, even schoolhouse rock, taught me that American is the land of opportunity and in most instances it is . . . but not always.

In 1654, the first Jews arrived in America from Recife, Brazil to what is now New York City.

Initially, some parts of America tolerated different religions, but other places didn't. For example, for years Jews were banned from living in places like Massachusetts, Connecticut and New Hampshire. Furthermore, Jewish tradition made it hard to live in the colonies. There were laws against working on Sunday, the Christian Sabbath, so if Jews didn't work on Saturdays, the Jewish Sabbath, they could only work a five day week, making it harder for them to support their families.

In spite of these challenges, the early Jewish settlers to America were more able to worship freely and generally had more rights than they did in Europe. And, with the First Amendment protecting religion and free speech, America became one of the safest places in the world for Jews to settle.

Still, as I looked closer back in our history I found the treatment of immigrants and refugees in America to be inconsistent. One of our best presidents, Franklin D. Roosevelt, made a terrible decision about Jewish refugees. During the Holocaust when many Jews needed a safe place, FDR and Congress turned them away. Congress turned down a bill that would have allowed 20,000 Jewish children from Germany to find safe haven in the U.S. Furthermore, when a ship with about 1,000 Jewish people trying to escape persecution tried to enter the United States it was turned away. After the ship was turned away TWICE it sailed back to Europe where many of the Jews were caught and sent to Nazi concentration camps.

Unfortunately, today we are experiencing a lot of anti-immigrant feelings. President Trump and his administration have repeatedly tried to place a travel ban on immigrants from several Muslim-majority countries.

Additionally, the Trump Administration is also trying to cancel DACA, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, which will directly impact about 690,000 people.

The Trump administration has started separating parents from children to try to make people not want to immigrate illegally. One example of this comes from an El Salvadoran family whose father fled to America to escape gang violence. After the Dad left, the gang tried to kill his 16 year-old son. So the Mom took the 16 year old, as well as her 3 year old son and 11 year old daughter across the border into America where she thought they would be safe. They were caught and her kids were taken from her and placed in foster care while the mother went through a trial to consider her application for refuge. The kids spent months in foster where they weren't even allowed to hug each other. How is it acceptable for our country to punish a 3 year old by separating him from his Mom and family—for any reason—is beyond me.

Many Americans believe that immigrants come and take jobs and resources and bring crime and other evils. When I first learned about immigrants, I thought that most barely spoke English, worked at fast food restaurants, and lived in tiny one bedroom apartments. These beliefs including my own early impressions-are based on inaccurate stereotypes.

In fact, America needs immigrants. They help our economy; they are often job-makers and entrepreneurs, taxpayers and consumers. “Compared with all Americans, U.S.-born children of immigrants are more likely to go to college, less likely to live in poverty, and equally likely to be homeowners.” Furthermore, immigrant-headed households who are close to the poverty line rely less on government help than U.S.-headed households in the same position.

The facts are clear-it is simply not true that most immigrants come over to America and sit around doing no work and relying on the social safety net.

Moreover, many undocumented immigrants in America are here because they are fleeing severe economic hardship, violence, or persecution. Because Jews have often been in a similar situation of fleeing to safety, I believe that we in particular need to welcome these strangers. Given the Jewish experience through the ages, and notably the Holocaust, the current situation in Syria should be especially meaningful to Jews.

We watch what is happening in Syria where hundreds of thousands of children and families have died since the start of the Syrian War. Yet, in the first three months of 2018, the U.S.-the richest, most powerful, greatest country in the world-has accepted only 11 Syrian refugees. You heard right-11 Syrian refugees in three months. This is un-

believable and I am speechless to as how our government is responding to this tragedy.

Still, there is room for hope. Individuals around the country are working tirelessly to assist Syrian refugees I am proud to say that my Machar congregation and people like Hannah in my B'Nei Mitzvah class, are working to help Syrian refugees in the U.S.

REMEMBERING MAJOR
CHRISTOPHER T. ZANETIS

HON. SUSAN W. BROOKS

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 28, 2018

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise today to honor the life of a true American hero, Major Christopher “Tripp” Zanetis who gave his country the last full measure of devotion. On March 15, 2018, Major Zanetis and six other American soldiers were killed when their helicopter crashed during a mission in Iraq. Major Zanetis served with the 106th Rescue Wing, New York Air National Guard and was deployed in support of Operation Inherent Resolve in Iraq. I, along with all Americans, stand in eternal gratitude for the dedication, service and sacrifice of this young man. As we celebrate our nation's 242nd birthday and our freedoms on July 4th I would like to take a moment to honor and recognize the service of Major Zanetis who gave his life to protect the liberties Americans hold dear.

A native of Carmel, Indiana, Tripp graduated from Carmel High School in 1999, where he was on the Greyhounds' diving team and a member of the Ambassadors' show choir. His education led him to New York City, where he received a Bachelor of Arts in Politics from New York University and graduated cum laude. Tripp quickly stood out as a leader serving on the student senate and as President of the student body. He was also a member of the NYU swimming and diving team.

On September 11, 2001, Tripp was living three blocks from the World Trade Center. In the midst of the terrorist attacks, Tripp volunteered at Ground Zero helping first responders aid victims. Tripp stayed at Ground Zero for hours assisting with the response. His experience on 9/11 inspired him to join the New York City Fire Department in 2004, where he ultimately became a Fire Marshal and was assigned to the Bureau of Fire Investigation's Citywide South in Brooklyn. In 2014, Tripp received a commendation for bravery for his role in the investigative unit.

Tripp joined the Air National Guard in 2008 and trained to fly the Air Force's combat search and rescue helicopter—the HH60G PaveHawk. He was later deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq in 2011 and 2012 with Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation New Dawn. During his service with the Air National Guard, he flew search and rescue helicopters with the 106th Rescue Wing. Tripp received the Meritorious Service Medal and five Air Medals for combat missions. While still on active duty, Tripp enrolled at Stanford Law School. There, he served as co-president of the Stanford Law Veterans organization, co-produced the Stanford Law musical, and facilitated Stanford Law's inaugural OutLaw Conference on LGBTQ Advocacy in the workplace. Tripp was also a member of both the International Refugee Assistance Project and the Stanford

Journal of International Law. He graduated with pro bono distinction in 2017.

His many awards are a testament to the exceptional character of this incredibly talented, compassionate, and immensely brave young man. A true public servant, Tripp continued striving for success beyond the combat field and advocated for LGBTQ and human rights. Tripp strived to make a difference, taking an internship with the Office of Legal Affairs at NATO Headquarters in Brussels. He was also a participant of the Stanford International

Human Rights Conflict Resolution Clinic and was awarded the National LGBT Bar Association's Student Leadership Award.

Major Zanetis will forever be remembered as an extraordinary individual who gave his life defending the freedoms that we so cherish. Tripp came from a family of true patriots, following the example set by his maternal and paternal grandfathers who were both World War II veterans. Major Zanetis is survived by his parents, Sarah and John Zanetis; sisters, Angela and Britt Zanetis; nephew, Beau

Zanetis; grandmother, Joyce Galbreath; numerous loving Aunts and Uncles; and his boyfriend, Jean Pouget-Abadie. Tripp also leaves behind his beloved Malinois, Nyx. I extend my deepest condolences to Tripp's family and friends who mourn his loss. On a day we gather together to honor our independence, may we remember the sacrifices made by patriots like Major Zanetis who so selflessly defend our rights and freedoms.