

Tree of Peace and Justice

A Dedication

“Whoever witnesses an injustice, must change it with his or her hand.
If unable to stop [the injustice], then [speak against it] with his or her tongue.
And if still unable [to protest aloud], then [grieve] within his or her heart.”
- Prophet Muhammad (Hadith)

Al Fatih Academy students, staff, and faculty will dedicate a Tree of Peace and Justice on Friday, 19 January 2007 at 12:00noon.

This tree represents our school’s commitment to ensure that each of us dedicate ourselves towards actions for peace and seeking justice for all. The dedication ceremony comes at a time when we are celebrating our American Muslim heritage in various ways.

First, it is the beginning of two new calendars: the solar/common era calendar of 2007, and the lunar, Islamic calendar of 1428. Both points in time give us the opportunity to reflect on how we will use this coming year to actively build peace within our selves and among one another.

Second, we recognize the life and work of peace activist Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Informed by many religions and traditions, this great man embodied the commitment to justice and the effective use of non-violence as a means to attain peace.

Third, Muslim pilgrims have just returned from Hajj, a spiritual journey to the cities of Makkah and Madinah. In Makkah, they reenacted the stories of Hagar and Prophets Abraham (Ibraheem) and Ishmael (Ismaeel) and reemphasized the importance of equality, brotherhood, and sacrifice.

Fourth, the Islamic calendar represents the years since the migration of believers who were persecuted in Makkah to the embracing city of Madinah. As believers, these *muhajireen* left all worldly possessions in search of freedom and peace. They were met by the Madinan helpers, *Ansar*, who partnered with them in giving them sustenance as well as peace of mind.

All four of these essential remembrances come together in a dedication that comes from the Iroquois people who were peace-seekers, caretakers of the earth, and immensely spiritual. We embrace the Peace Tree tradition of the Iroquois Native Americans, who made the dedication of a tree to peace by burying their war weapons beneath its trunk and making promises to keep the peace. We will bury our thoughts and deeds of pain and hurt and place our “leaves of peace promises” around the trunk of our tree.

We make this dedication as part of our duty as God’s creation to:

- ❖ Remember His Mercy, *rahmah*,
- ❖ Care for His creation, *khaleefa*,
- ❖ Know that we are brothers and sisters all, *akhuwah*,
- ❖ Actively seek peace by renouncing acts of violence, *salaam*, and
- ❖ Work to bring together all who seek peace, *amalan salehan*.

We dedicate, promise, and commit to building peace within ourselves, with each other, and for the sake of all God’s creation.

