

THE PEACE OF ABRAHAM, HAGAR, & SARAH: SHARING SACRED SEASONS, 2007
WE CALL FOR A NATION-WIDE FAST ON OCTOBER 8, 2007
TO DISCOVER THE TRUE AMERICA AND TO MOVE FROM CONQUEST TO
COMMUNITY, FROM VIOLENCE TO REVERENCE

<http://www.tentofabraham.org/>

America stands in great danger of becoming addicted to violence, at home and overseas. Pervasive violence in American culture, society, and policy is expressed in mass murders like those at Columbine and Virginia Tech; in daily murders on the streets of our cities; in physical and sexual abuse in families and communities; in the obsession of our media with grotesque violence; in our government's decision to wage an unnecessary, morally abhorrent, and disastrous war; in its effort to make torture a legitimate instrument of policy; indeed, most lethal of all, in the ecocidal violence we are imposing on the earth itself.

We must begin transforming our culture, our public policy, and our lives -- turning from conquest to community, from violence to reverence. To mark this transformation of our inner selves and our society, we call Americans of all faiths and communities to join one practice of renewal and transformation that all our traditions share: a fast.

Even when on the official holiday of Columbus Day we lift up what we call the "discovery" of America, the deeds we are actually remembering were infused with conquest and violence. So we intend to transform that day (this year October 8) to become a day when we Americans can 'discover' our own true selves, our own best selves.

So we call for millions to fast from food from sunrise to sunset on October 8, and to connect that physical fast with sharing our food with the hungry and with a cultural, emotional, and political fast from acts and spectacles of violence.

In an America more religiously diverse than in the past, more expressive of the Infinite faces of the Holy One, all our religious traditions cry out for peaceful solutions to the problems that we face, whether as individuals or communities or as a society. Yet in each of our communities, some have responded to the earthquake of change in which we are living by turning our different approaches to the Holy One into occasions for suspicion and hostility, contempt and rage, pressure and triumphalism, even for violence. We are members of The Tent of Abraham, Hagar, & Sarah – Jews, Christians, and Muslims who have learned deeply from and with each other to face and transcend the dangers of violence between our communities.

This fall, the sacred seasons of many of our communities overlap into a shared season of sacred self-assessment and self-transformation.

So we encourage our many diverse ethical, spiritual, and religious communities to choose their own ways of drawing on their specific sacred seasons this fall, to help us all turn from violence to peacemaking. For various communities, these nearby times include the entire month of Ramadan (and the Night of Power, commemorating the first

revelation of the Quran, on the night of October 8); the High Holy Days and Sukkot; Mahatma Gandhi's birthday, October 2; the Feast Day of Francis of Assisi, October 4; Worldwide Communion Sunday and Pavarana / Sangha Day, October 7. Some communities of the First Nations have already begun to observe Columbus Day itself with practices that transform its meaning.

While we encourage us all to observe our own specific practices of self-renewal, we also take joy in uniting to designate October 8 as one day of focus for us all, So we call on all Americans to set aside that day during this season of shared sacred time – A day when we commit ourselves to turn from conquest to community, from violence to reverence --

A day when we come together, sharing with each other our different forms of prayer, reflection, and sacred study;

Turning our attention from material domination to spiritual depth and communal sharing;

- Fasting from food from dawn to dusk, and together at sunset feeding each other and especially the hungry;
- Fasting from the excesses of consumption that do violence to each other and the earth,.
- Fasting that day from the culture of violence -- and to that end, we invite all our media to refrain from airing and all Americans to refrain from watching or joining in productions, practices, and images that glorify or normalize violence.
- Setting forth in public vigil our determination to turn from conquest to community, from violence to reverence.

The earthquake of change around us and within us can inspire fear, despair, rage – or exaltation. Together, we can celebrate the seeds of intellectual, emotional, and spiritual creativity in each of us; comfort each other from the fear, rage, and despair that might otherwise consume us; and reject the impulse to express our fears through violence.

Among us, some might focus on one or another aspect of healing the violence that pervades our lives:

- Ending the shattering of Iraqi and American lives. Generously offering American funds – but not control – for international and interreligious bodies to assist Iraqis in making peace and rebuilding their country, while swiftly bringing safely home all American troops.
- Ending the epidemics of murder on our streets and schools. Providing in all our neighborhoods decent jobs with a living wage and livable hours, with time for family nurture, reflective rest, and community service -- to replace the despair, the rage, and the guns that have led to epidemics of murder.
- Ending the use or facilitation of torture, and reaffirming habeas corpus and other avenues by which those who claim denials of their human rights can seek their vindication.
- Acting against the ecocidal violence that is now threatening earth and humankind alike, by making sustainable energy sources fully available to all, calming the growing climate

crisis, encouraging simplicity in life-paths, and making sure there is living-space for all the life-forms in God's creation.

- Healing our media from the normalization of grotesque and obscene violence.
- Ending the physical and sexual abuse that has disfigured many of our families and communities, and restoring them as homes for loving compassion.

We see the Day of Discovering the True America as a beginning, not an end; the seed, not the flower or the fruit. In choosing a day to sow this seed together, we can see the profound power that arises when we decide to change our selves, can help each other make the harvest happen. info@tentofabraham.org