

Story from Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable

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(Turkey, Erzincan-2018 Garipardıç (Lonely Juniper) Hill from Zeynep Kariparduc)

A lonely Juniper tree stands on top of a hill at the Kayi village in a small city known as Erzincan, Turkey. It is called the Lonely Juniper since it is the only tree on top of its hill. In Muslim faith, loneliness also refers to being close to God. The reason our ancestors picked the last name, Kariparduc, was because they wanted to inherit the sense of closeness to God to their lineage which we gracefully embrace this beautiful lastname. Muslims always consider observing and aspiring nature as very important aspects of their spiritual journey-- as our Last name and my faith keeps me inspired by nature. Whenever I go to Millcreek Canyon, the surroundings immediately connect me with my past and I feel the serenity in my heart. I also think that the God who created nature with perfection and gifted us to feel joy for his

generosity. I celebrate diversity in nature as how different colors, smells, creatures, trees, animals together create a breathtaking beauty and harmony. This is one of my lessons to take from nature to create perfection with diverse and inclusive communities.

“If the Day of Judgement erupts while you are planting a new tree, carry on and plant it.”, the Prophet Muahmmad (PBUH) saying.