

Extract from a Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

In the Dispensation of Abraham, by “immolation” was meant attainment to the station of sacrifice, not butchery and the shedding of blood. This is the mystery of sacrifice, and inexhaustible are its meanings. Among them are freedom from passion and desire, laying down one’s life in the path of guidance, and detachment from all save God. Another meaning is the annihilation of the seed and its appearance in all respects in the tree and the fruit. The seed doth truly sacrifice itself for the tree, for were the seed not to disintegrate outwardly, that tree with its branches, fruits, leaves, and blossoms would not come into being in the world of existence. Yet another meaning of sacrifice is for the Point of Truth, with all His manifold tokens, signs, precepts, and acts, to appear and become evident in all manifestations, whether universal or particular. That is to say, souls would derive their grace from His splendours and hearts receive their illumination from His rays. This mystery of sacrifice is clearly evident in the essence of every sanctified Reality, every celestial Being, and every effulgent Manifestation, in accordance with the rank and station of each. All have sacrificed Themselves, all have laid down Their lives in the path of God, and all have hastened to love’s field of martyrdom. For this reason, Isaac and Ishmael are both sacrifices, as are indeed all the true servants of God. This station is one of the necessary attributes of the Stars of the heaven of Divine Unity.

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá