

**In each age the greatest sacrifice of all is made  
by the Manifestation of God.**

# ABRAHAM

**Thousands of years ago Abraham was willing to make the  
supreme sacrifice - His own son.**

Many, many years ago, in the Middle East, there was a small tribe of travelling shepherds and cattle breeders, led by a man called Abraham. They moved around the dry lands, searching out places to feed and water their animals, and moving from town to town to sell them. Among all the tribes of the desert and all the people of the towns, the tribe of Abraham was different. Everyone else, in those times, believed that there were many gods. Only the Hebrews, Abraham's people, knew that there is only one God, though men may call Him by many different names.

At that time, people thought that they should make sacrifices to the gods. Maybe they felt that a sacrifice was like a bargain, and that if they offered something up to their god they would be given a reward. Often they made sacrifices to ask that their crops would grow well or that their diseases might be taken away. Sometimes the sacrifice was an animal, which they would kill as a special blood offering. Some people would even use a child for a sacrifice. But not among Abraham's tribe.

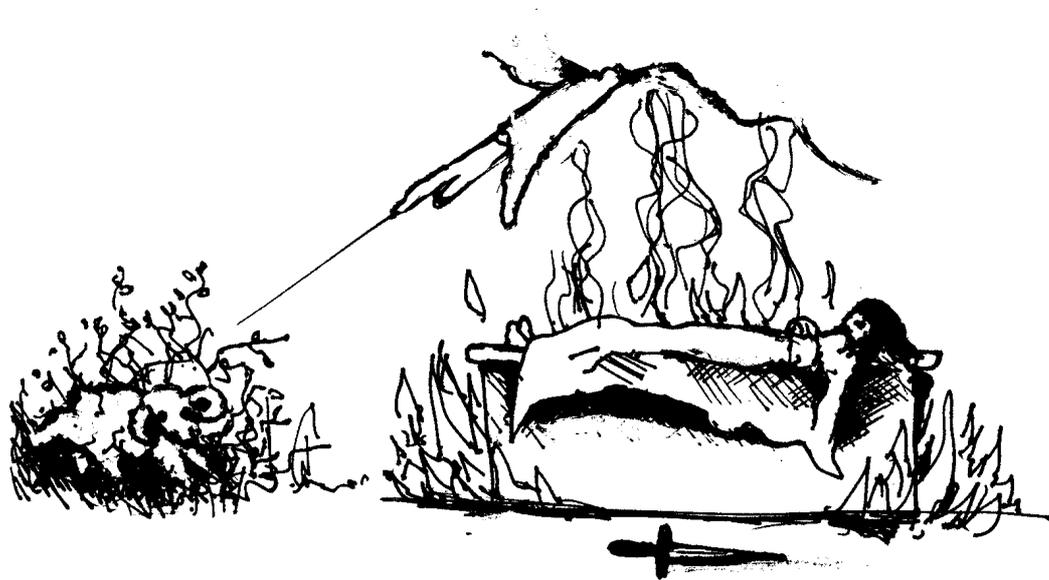
Through all His adult life, Abraham had longed for a son, but He and His wife Sarah grew old and no son was born to them. Then, when it seemed that it was too late, a baby boy was born. The longed for child was very, very precious, and Abraham loved him very much. He grew into a fine, strong boy and made Abraham and Sarah very happy.

Then, one night, a dreadful thing happened. God spoke to Abraham in a dream, and told Him that He must take His dearly loved son into the mountains and kill him as a sacrifice. Abraham knew that even above His love for His son, He must obey God. Broken-hearted, Abraham and His son, Isaac set out for the wild and lonely place on the mountain where the offering was to be made.

Isaac was very brave. He knew that the most important thing, more important even than life, was to be obedient to God.

When all was ready, Isaac lay down and Abraham lifted the knife, prepared to make the blood offering. Just as the knife was ready to fall, God spoke. He told Abraham to stop, and allow the boy to live.

For Abraham this had been the greatest test of obedience, for He loved Isaac more than His own life, and had even been prepared to sacrifice him if it was God's Will.



Isaac prepares to be sacrificed.

*Note: The name of the son to be sacrificed in this story is Isaac. This is according to the Bible. In the Qur'an the name is Ismael. The spiritual significance of the story is the same in either case.*