Holidays become meaningless when their original purpose and meaning are forgotten. In such instances, the holiday becomes merely an occasion for festivity and indulgence. So, Why we celebrate this holy day of Eid Al Adha?

The story Eid Al Adha has a biblical origin, and it is the story of the testing of Ibrahim’s faith by God. Both the Quran and the Torah record the high drama narratives of the story. The Quran records Ibrahim saying: “Son, God came to me in a vision and commanded me to offer you as a sacrifice. What do you think we should do?” Ismail replied: “I trust God and will abide by His will. Do what he commanded you to do.”

At the last split second, God interrupts the sacrificial process. God intervenes saying: “O Ibrahim, thou has already fulfilled the vision.” Ibrahim passes the test, and a ram was substituted for sacrifice in place of the son. Thus, father & son became role models for true Muslims; those who place God’s will before their own. Ibrahim, after waiting for so long for an heir promised by God, is now required to sacrifice him. Ismail, on the other hand, was asked to make the supreme sacrifice; his own life.

So what is the moral and significance of the story? The moral of the story is that GOD DOES NOT DEMAND HUMAN SACRIFICE, BUT TRUST AND OBEDIENCE AS A BASIS FOR FELLOWSHIP WITH HIM. The story was about a trial of the will and the faith of the father and the son. Ibrahim was tested on the priorities of his faith, love, and trust. Ismail was tested for obedience. SELF-SACRIFICE is the significance of the story sufficient to celebrate Eid Al Adha. Ismail offered to stand true to his promise if his self-sacrifice was really required.

What does Eid Al Adha mean to us – the Muwahhidun? Like Ibrahim & Ismail, we their descendants, are to be tested for our worthiness also. We qualify by traveling a threefold path to Peace, Faith, and Unity. Our pilgrimage is strewn with temptations, obstacles, and distractions. Our free will is tested and we must SACRIFICE to reach our objective of UNITY WITH GOD.

In our lives we should be striving for Unity with God, and sacrificing to achieve our goal in Tawhid. First, one must avoid Self-Indulgence. This lesson is learned by the luminary al-Aql is ever with us. Can some one tell us what this lesson is?

Our achievement through our mental faculty must be tempered with piety (humility), lest our attainment make us arrogant and cause us to be cut off from the blessing and union with the One.
Second we must sacrifice worldly pleasures. We should not let worldly pleasures distract us from the deeper meanings and noble pursuits in our daily lives, and especially on this noble occasion and revered religious holy day.

So, what is the meaning of Pilgrimage in Tawhid. In Muslim traditions Eid Al Adha is a very important component of the pilgrimage to the House of God. One third of the sacrifice (contributions, charity) on the Eid to be given to the poor, 1/3 as a donation, and 1/3 retained for kinsfolk (relatives). Tawhid considers pilgrimage not simply a physical trip to Mecca, but a pilgrimage to the “House of Knowledge” or Tawhid. Thus our life itself becomes a continuous pilgrimage on the path of Tawhid leading ultimately to the union with the One.

In summary, we learned what the real meaning of sacrifice is. We learned that life itself is a test. The journey to the “House of Knowledge” will demand a great deal of sacrifice for the common good in this world, and for the eternal unity with God. So, Eid Al Adha is the day of:

1) Self-judgment, whereby we reinforce our faith, and assess and judge our actions and behavior

2) Recognition, Appreciation, and Remembrance

3) Celebrating God’s existence and the revelation of His Instructions

4) Reconfirming Tawhid and the Oneness of God