

To the one who voluntarily suffers death rather than deny his religion by words or deeds; such action is afforded special, institutionalized recognition in most major religions of the world. The term may also refer to anyone who sacrifices his life or something of great value for the sake of principle.

Judaism.

The universality of persecution throughout its history has engendered in Judaism an explicit ideal of martyrdom. It begins with Abraham, who according to legend was cast into a lime kiln and saved from the fire by divine grace. The tradition was continued by Isaac, who consented to be sacrificed by his father, and by Daniel, whose example compelled the popular imagination.

Christianity.

The original meaning of the Greek word martyr was "witness;" in this sense it is often used in the New Testament. Since the most striking witness that Christians could bear to their faith was to die rather than deny it, the word soon began to be used in reference to one who was not only a witness but specifically a witness unto death. This usage is present, at least implicitly, in Acts 22:20 and Revelation 2:13.

Islam.

The Islamic designation shahid (Arabic: "witness") is equivalent to and in a sense derivative of the Judaeo-Christian concept of martyr. The full sense of "witness unto death" does not appear in the Quran but receives explicit treatment in the subsequent Hadith literature, in which it stated that martyrs, among the host of heaven, stand nearest the throne of God.

Buddhism.

While distinctly lacking a history of persecution or of violent conflict with other faiths, Buddhism does recognize among its adherents a venerable class of martyrs. The Jataka (q.v.) commentary on the former lives of the Buddha is in a sense a martyrology of the bodhisattva ("buddha-to-be") and his disciples, recounting their continual self-sacrifice and repeated deaths. In Mahayana (Greater Vehicle) Buddhism, the decision by one destined to become a buddha in this or another life to postpone his own enlightenment to alleviate the suffering of others is regarded as martyrdom.

From the spiritual state of God-union (spiritual enlightenment, Nirvana, Samadhi, one's final surrender, At-Onement, etc., etc.) suicide and killing (for any reason) is the unlawful concept of the separate (from God) ego-I eccentric mentality.

Socrates rejects suicide, but drank hemlock as the fate for his physical body (but not his eternal spiritual self). Jesus also accepted the fate for his physical body knowing they could never kill or destroy his true spiritual nature.

The Holy War is the inner battle (same as the inner battle of Arjuna in the Bhagavad-Gita) of overcoming the limitations of the physical body and its self created physical psychological ego-I mentality. Meditation causes the apocalypse (destruction) of the outer self (lower mind) and the beginning of a new life. In Islam, this is the "final surrender" that is found in deep meditation that Mohammed (BPUH) discovered in the cave, and is his true teaching which is the same teaching from all true and loving teachers (i.e., Don't just worship God - as a separate being - but become god in a state of God-union). Only this is REAL GOD (i.e., There is "no God but God." (*Actual* attainment, not thinking or feeling - but the actual moment to moment actual experience of holy divine transfiguration as the foundation of one's new life as eternal spirit-mind.)

To the one who has attained spiritual enlightenment (true eternal life and freedom), the killing of the physical body is as absurd and illogical as trying to kill the individual's cloak or overcoat.

Martyrdom is strictly a human egoic-I concept no matter what spiritual or holy position a person claims to be (in the past or present time).

To be accepted as a would be or past martyr is strictly a "social event" based on the unnatural individualized mentality of the society.

To an enlightened human being, life in the physical really does not exist (it is a secondary reality) and death in the physical really does not happen either. Both are illusions of the mind contained in the limited brain (bio-computer).

The creation and manifestation of the universal motion picture called life is the ACTUAL and ONLY *miracle*, what the actors (human beings) choose to believe or how to act is up to them.

Truely we are but the stuff that dreams are made of. -W. Shakespeare

Each human being contains a physical consciousness and a spiritual consciousness (the spark, flame, holy spirit) of the one true God. The gesture of killing one's self or that of another is nothing less than the killing of God himself trying to manifest and materialize him/itself into the world...in order to know and experience him/itself as living being...the divine purpose of creation. How then can the killing of one's own self or that of another not be called the most ignorant (evil) of any act in the so called material realm?

What do you think ... "*Thou shalt not kill*" really means?