

Analyzing a Primary Source: The Koran

The passages below are taken from the Koran, the holy book of Islam. Read the passages and then answer the questions that follow. Read textbook pages 206–07 for background information.

“Be just: the unjust never prosper. Be valiant: die rather than yield. Be merciful: slay neither old men, children, nor women. Destroy neither fruit trees, grain, nor cattle. Keep your word even to your enemies.

The law of life requires: sincerity to God, severity to self, justice to all people, service to elders. Kindness to the young, generosity to the poor. Good counsel to friends. Forbearance with enemies. Indifference to fools. Respect to the learned.

We have prescribed for thee therein a life for a life, and an eye for an eye, and a nose for a nose,

and an ear for an ear, and a tooth for a tooth, and for wounds retaliation.

Do unto all men as you would they should do unto you, and reject for others what you would reject for yourself.

Any object of adoration is better than self-worship.

Thou thinkest thou art but a small thing whereas in thee is involved the whole universe.”

(From *The Koran*, translated by the Rev. J. M. Rodwell, Everyman's Library. Reprinted by permission of J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd.)

1. What virtues does the Koran seem to encourage? _____

2. Do other religions you have studied stress any of these virtues? Give examples. _____

Extra Credit 3. Which passage reflects the Code of Hammurabi? _____

4. What did Muhammad mean by “Any object of adoration is better than self-worship”? _____

5. What does the last passage reflect about Muhammad's feelings about the individual? _____

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