

claiming God's divine authority) condone much bloodshed when disciplining wayward members. They enforce their legal codes on pain of fierce punishment or death.



For many religionists, life becomes a cosmic struggle. All activity becomes a 'great encounter between cosmic forces--an ultimate good and evil, a divine truth and falsehood.' Violence thus becomes justified in pursuit of these cosmic, divinely ordained ends.

## 2. Aspects of the Qur'an and violence.

a. **The Qur'an and peace.** Over 114 verses, spread throughout 54 suras of the Qur'an, advocate living peacefully with neighbors within the Dar al-Islam. The two 'verses of the sword,' which advocate warfare, often receive the most attention. For many outside the bounds of Islam, these verses seem to nullify themes of peace.

### b. Commentary on the 'verses of the sword.'

Abdullah Yusuf Ali's commentary on these 'verses of the Sword' is helpful.

(1) Sura 2:216-217 reads:

*'Fighting is obligatory for you, much as you dislike it. But you may hate a thing although it is good for you, and love a thing although it is bad for you. God knows, but you know it not.'*

*They ask you about the sacred month. Say: 'To fight in this month is a grave offense; but to debar others from the path of God, to deny Him, and to expel His worshippers from the Holy Mosque, is far more grave in His sight. Idolatry is more grievous than bloodshed.'*



The commentary reads, in part,

*"...their enemies not only forced them to engage in actual warfare, but interfered with their conscience, persecuted them and their families, openly insulted and denied God, kept out the Muslim Arabs from the Sacred Mosque, and exiled them. Such violence and intolerance are deservedly called worse than slaughter."*

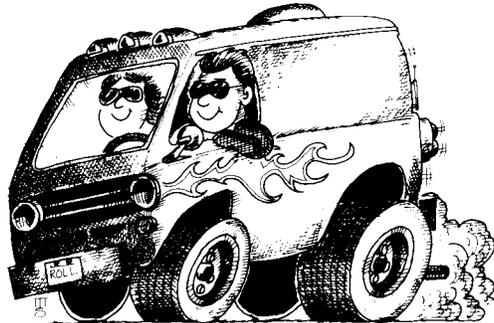


(2) Sura 9:5 reads :

*"When the sacred months are over slay the idolaters wherever you find them. Arrest them, besiege them, and lie in ambush everywhere for them. If they repent and take to prayer and render the alms levy, allow them to go their way. God is forgiving and merciful."*

Commentary includes,

*"When war becomes inevitable, it must be prosecuted with vigor...But even then there is room for repentance and amendment on the part of the guilty party, and if that takes place, our duty is forgiveness and the establishment of peace."*



"Take a mystery drive."

## Vocabulary List: Religious Texts--Societal Implications

**'Greater' Jihad** (ji-HAD): The Greater Jihad (al-jihad al-akbar) refers to the personal struggle of the heart, where the believer strives to overcome personal temptations and the carnal self. This inner struggle is Jihad's highest form. During this Jihad, Muslims strive to internalize the Islamic message through prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

**'Lesser' Jihad:** The Lesser Jihad (al-jihad al-asghar) is the outward struggle of Muslims against those attacking the faith and requires using the tongue, hands or sword. Only in the last instance, however, do Muslims engage in mortal combat by taking up arms against Islam's enemies" (page 34).

**Commentary:** Comments or explanations of scripture. Usually scholars of the texts provide detailed analysis and application in their explanations.

**Dar al-Islam** (DAHR ul-is-lam): Abode of Islam. Social justice, solidarity of purpose, political stability are enjoyed by those living under the umbrella of Islamic law.

**Divine Decree:** All is decided by God and in some sense comes from Him.

**Hadith** (hah-DEETH): The report of the Prophet's utterances in his role as guide. They serve to assist the faithful.

**Martyrs:** Those who die for their faith.

**Nominal:** In name only. Having the label of a religion but being very lax in practice of that religion.

**Paradise:** Heaven.

**Religious Terrorism:** Violence done in the name of strongly held belief or violence which uses religion as a pretext for its justification.

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**Reminders:** Qur'an quotes in architecture and on household objects, calls to prayer, beautiful mosques and minarets, designed to instill right practice within Muslims.

**Sharia** (sha-REE-ah): Divine law in its totality...maps the road men and women are to follow in this life.

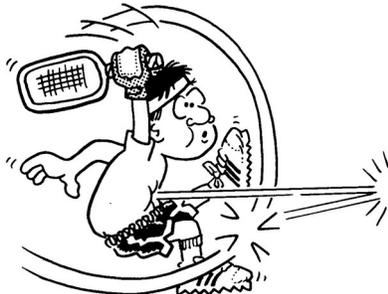
**Sura** (SOO-ruh): Chapter of the Qur'an.

**Umma** (OOM-muh): Peoplehood--the majesty and mystique of being a part of the Muslim community.

**Usury** (YOO zhuh-ree): Lending money at excessively high interest.

**Verses of the Sword:** Two verses of the Qur'an which describe the obligatory nature of fighting (under certain conditions) within Islam.

## Review Quiz: Religious Texts--Societal Implications



**Part One--Multiple Choice:** Place the letter of the most correct response in the blank provided.

1. \_\_\_\_ Of the five foundational pillars of Islam, \_\_\_\_\_ concern practice--acts, deed, endeavors--adherents must fulfill.
  - A. two
  - B. one
  - C. four
2. \_\_\_\_ Sources of Islamic ethical practice include the Qur'an, Hadith and...
  - A. Sharia.
  - B. Caliphate.
  - C. Bedu Code.
3. \_\_\_\_ Concerning motivation, \_\_\_\_\_ is critical in Islamic ethical practice.
  - A. outward activity alone
  - B. internal, heartfelt intention
4. \_\_\_\_ What is not a purpose of 'reminders' in Islamic practice?
  - A. Call faithful back to original, foundational belief
  - B. Combat hostile, negligent, inattentive attitudes of humankind
  - C. Direct newly converted populations into the correct way
  - D. Antagonize the faithful with constant repetition

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5. \_\_\_\_\_ The binding age at which Islamic adherents become responsible for ethical practice is...
- A. 21
  - B. Adulthood
  - C. Infancy
  - D. Puberty
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Some see the sense of brotherhood, compassion, love and courtesy exhibited by Islamic teaching as grounds for...
- A. extremist fundamentalist action
  - B. terrorism
  - C. pacifism
7. \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ divine law is held in extremely high regard by Muslims.
- A. Memorization of
  - B. Reformulation of
  - C. Obedience to
8. \_\_\_\_\_ What words begin every Sura of the Qur'an?
- A. 'Praise be to Allah'
  - B. 'In the name of God the compassionate, the merciful'
  - C. 'There is no god but God and Muhammad is His messenger'
9. \_\_\_\_\_ The most important concrete reality in the life of a Muslim after God, the prophet, and spiritual/religious figures is...
- A. the state
  - B. the family
  - C. lesser jihad
10. \_\_\_\_\_ The \_\_\_\_\_ family--cousins, aunts, uncles--is the focus of Middle East Muslim culture.
- A. immediate
  - B. extended
  - C. father's

## Unit 10: Religious Texts--Societal Implications

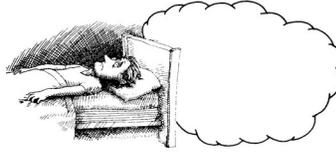
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11. \_\_\_\_\_ Qur'an quotes in architecture and on household objects, and beautiful mosques and minarets serve as...
- A. objects of art and architecture solely.
  - B. advertisements to claim Islamic converts.
  - C. reminders of God's presence.
12. \_\_\_\_\_ Soldiers killed while engaged in 'lesser' jihad are called \_\_\_\_\_ and achieve instant paradise.
- A. fanatics
  - B. zealots
  - C. martyrs
13. \_\_\_\_\_ The word \_\_\_\_\_ comes from the Arabic term describing to strive, struggle or fight.
- A. ayatollah
  - B. jihad
  - C. Islam
14. \_\_\_\_\_ An inner struggle to overcome personal temptations and the carnal self describes...
- A. 'greater' jihad
  - B. 'lesser' jihad
  - C. angst
15. \_\_\_\_\_ Over 114 verses spread throughout the Qur'an advocate...
- A. living peacefully with neighbors within the Dar al-Islam.
  - B. warfare.
  - C. 'lesser' jihad.
16. \_\_\_\_\_ 'Verses of the sword' refers to...
- A. sharia pronouncements concerning laws of war.
  - B. Qur'an statements advocating warfare.
  - C. spiritual warfare.
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**Part Two--True/False:**



1. \_\_\_\_\_ Islamic ethics has little to say concerning economics.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Islam values practice over belief.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Just as in other religions, there are nominal--in name only--Muslims.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ For some, Islam can be a source of pacifist belief and action.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Muslim banks charge high percentages of interest on money lent.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ The Hadith promotes ideas similar to 'do unto others as you would have others do unto you.'
7. \_\_\_\_\_ The Muslim emphasis on creation supports an ethical concern with environmental affairs.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Assurance of paradise inspires a Muslim to engage in good works.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ The Qur'an assures martyrs who die in battle ('lesser' jihad) that 'instant paradise' is their reward.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ According to Ft. Leavenworth's George Gawrych, using the sword is but one aspect of 'lesser' jihad.
11. \_\_\_\_\_ Islam is the only religion which has adherents who resort to violence.
12. \_\_\_\_\_ The cross, saber and sword are religious symbols which, over time, may promote violence.
13. \_\_\_\_\_ Warfare, sacrifice and martyrdom are part of the accumulated myths and rituals of many religions.
14. \_\_\_\_\_ Religious terrorists often enforce their legal codes on pain of fierce punishment or death.

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15. \_\_\_\_\_ Within Islam, limitations apply even to those who  
fight \_\_\_\_\_ for the cause of Truth.

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16. \_\_\_\_\_ Within Islam, forgiveness and establishment of peace is \_\_\_\_\_ necessary if enemies repent and amend their ways.



"Cheers"

## **Unit 10: Religious Texts--Societal Implications**

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