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Toward a Phenomenological Archeology of Islamic Violence

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In this paper, I would like to analyze Islamic violence from a philosophical perspective. More specifically, my aim is to outline a phenomenological archeology of Islamic violence, the point of which is to shed light on the original motives at the source of both objective and subjective, real and artificial accounts of Islamic violence. I will maintain that liberal Muslims' attempts at defending Islam against all those claiming that violence is intrinsic to this religion — let us think of islamophobic criticisms as well as of twisted readings from within the Muslim realm — are bound to fail unless they learn to address the experiential dimension of the Qur'an.

However, I will insist on the need to do so methodically, by including phenomenology in the scholar's toolkit, alongside other approaches, either traditional (tafsîr, fiqh, etc.) or historico-critical (rhetorics, anthropology, literary studies, semiotics, etc.). The paper will not address the "verses on war" per se but rather what I would call the "verses of ordeal", to be found in several places of the Qur'an. My objective thus is to create a new narrative where Islamic violence reveals itself no different from other kinds of religious violence, by showing precisely how all of them stem from a common melting-pot, which is nothing else but a human, too human experience of the world. Relying mostly on verses dealing with worldly life (*dunya*), I shall try to demonstrate that violence is omnipresent in the Qur'an only insofar as the Text actually narrates the vicissitudes of existence, of which violence is necessarily a main feature.