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### Original Research

## The Existentialist Approach to the Holy Quran and Explaining the Application of Existential Verses

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### Introduction

"In the Holy Quran, God has provided numerous solutions for human life. Engaging with this divine book, which contains the detail and explanation of everything, varies in each era and time, according to the needs of society, its priorities, and the challenges it faces, and requires a new interpretation. The Quran can be a remedy and cure for many problems and abnormalities of any era and any condition, provided that inferences appropriate to the needs of society are presented from it with a new approach.

One of the most effective ways to apply the verses of the Quran is for a person to consider themselves the addressee of the Quran and to examine the verses that revolve

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around the existential issues of man. The Holy Quran, with various expressions, has urged man towards self-awareness, and many examples have been given in it to draw attention to human existence. By contemplating these verses, one can derive appropriate interpretations for contemporary man in the form of an existential approach from the Quran.

Existentialism took shape in Europe from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This school, by placing concrete and tangible human beings as the main subject of its thought, was able to quickly find many audiences in post-war Europe. Despite presenting completely different ideas, existentialist philosophers almost equally repeat common themes and content in their works. These themes, which can be called existential themes, are in fact an exploration of human's everyday life and shining a light on the neglected aspects of his existence. The claim of the authors of the present article is that, by paying attention to the common themes among existentialists and with an existential approach, one can engage with the Holy Quran and, by rereading the verses of the Quran, extract Quranic answers to the existential issues of man, and ultimately make the message of the Quran more audible to contemporary man; because man seeks and accepts words that he considers the cure for his pains. So, if the Holy Quran is an eternal book that has fresh and sweet words for all people until the end of history, the essence and core of these words should be presented to them from a new perspective and in the form of a new language. Existentialism is a school that, according to our claim, has such a capacity; because, like the Holy Quran, it deals with the real human issues of a person who lives in the real world and is involved in the struggle of events, not with the unreal issues of an abstract human being that can only be found in the definitions of traditional philosophers. Individuality, choice, and borderline situations are themes that the present article focuses on."

## **Research background**

"To date, separate studies have been conducted on existentialism or certain existential themes, but no comprehensive research has been done that addresses the verses of the Holy Quran with an existential approach. The following articles have examined some existentialist themes in Islam or religious texts:

Karkon Beyragh, Habib, (٢٠١٣), "A Psychological, Existentialist, and Quranic Perspective on Conformity," *Interdisciplinary Studies of the Holy Quran*, Year ٤- No.

۲, pp. ۹۰-۵۹. This research explains and examines conformity from three perspectives: the Quran, psychology, and philosophy.

Kheradmand, Maryam, and Nazarnejad, Narges, (۲۰۱۳), "Borderline Situations in Existential Philosophies and Nahj al-Balagha," *Journal of Epistemological Research*, Year ۲, No. ۵. This article explains borderline situations in Nahj al-Balagha, but these situations have not been examined from the perspective of the Quran.

Namazi Esfahani, Mahmoud, (۲۰۱۹), "The Value of Choice from the Perspective of Islam and Existentialism," *Philosophical Knowledge*, Year ۱۲, No. ۲ (Serial ۶۶), pp. -۸۳ ۹۷. This article states that, from the perspective of existentialist philosophers, man exists only at the beginning of his existence, without having any specific essence. Then it is up to him to create his identity through his will and choice. However, from the perspective of Islam, despite creating existential superiority for its owner compared to other creatures, choice is not valuable in itself. Rather, the desirability of choice and the value of human voluntary actions lie in leading to human perfection.

The distinction of the present study from the aforementioned cases is that the existential concepts of individuality, choice, and borderline situations are explored in more detail and with a more detailed examination in the verses of the Quran".

## **Research method**

The method of this article is library-based

## **Result**

"If we approach the verses of the Holy Quran with innovative approaches, fresh questions, and a deeper understanding, we will find that the verses of the Quran are not merely historical or descriptive reports, but rather introduce comprehensive and objective models for reformative movements and individual activities of contemporary man. In the current situation, where it seems we are facing a different human being and a different world, these verses can properly fulfill their guiding role. Existential themes in existentialism are a suitable entry point for an existential approach to the Quran. Individuality is one of the common existential themes of existentialists, which shows man that each individual has an important role in his own destiny and that of others. The Quran's recommendation is not conformity with the group.

Choice is another theme that, according to the analysis of existentialists, provides man with many opportunities and causes the individual anxiety; because human happiness and misery are determined by his choices. In the words of some existentialists, such as Sartre, man is in a state of choice every moment, or at least, in Kierkegaard's words, man faces three great choices, and by choosing one of the spheres of pleasure-seeking, ethical, or religious, he can build a different future for himself.

Borderline situations are another theme that existentialists have addressed. According to them, man is obliged to place himself in borderline situations in order to better understand himself, so that in that situation, with the important and fateful decisions he makes for himself and others, he reveals the essence of his existence. With the same view, one can imagine a situation in which a person can improve his relationship with God, or act in a different way that distances him from God. It is worth mentioning that the themes raised in existentialism and the Quran, due to the intertwining of human existence, are not unrelated and far from each other, but each of the themes of choice, individuality, and borderline situations are closely related to each other."

**Keywords**

Existentialism; Existential approach; Existential themes; Existential verses; Freedom; Holy Quran; Individuality.