Islam and Existentialism: An Analysis of the Philosophy regarding God, Man, Universe, Existence and Education

a Hafiz Muhammad Ibrarullah, b Hafiz Inamullah

a University of Azad Jammu & Kashmir
b IER, University of Peshawar, Pakistan
Email: hafizinam@uop.edu.pk

ARTICLE DETAILS

ABSTRACT

Existentialism, as a philosophy, revolves around the man’s uniqueness and his experience in an unconcerned universe, unexplainable human existence, focus on freedom of choice and the responsibility acceptance of the consequences of one’s actions. Islam, on the other hand, is a complete code of life which explains all areas of man and has major focus on spiritual and intellectual capacity development of man at the same time for the reason that man is the combination of body and soul or spirit and matter. The current study contrasts Existentialism and Islam with respect to the ideology about God, man, universe, existence and education. The study, by presenting representative notions of both atheist existentialists and non-atheist existentialists, at the end passes the philosophy from Islamic filter and presents implications/recommendations for Muslims teachers and students.

© 2022 The authors. Published by SPCRD Global Publishing. This is an open access article under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0

Corresponding author’s email address: hafizinam@uop.edu.pk

1. Existentialist Perspective

The Existentialism gained currency after the World War II thus it represents mostly cultural movement and intellectual atmosphere of war time with background of Left Bank of Paris (Gordon, 2013). It spread through fiction and art and Sartre, Camus, Fanon and Beauvoir etc. in 1950’s are considered the central to this society. However, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche are considered to be the early existentialists. Existentialism revolves around the reliability of opinions of self and people, the relationship among object facts and experiences based on subjectivity, importance of temporality and life mortality, nature of relationship among people the structural development of an individual through society (Webber, 2008). Existentialists base their philosophy on five major points that are: existence precedes essence; time is of the essence, humanism, freedom/responsibility, primacy of ethical considerations (Flynn, 2014). The major aspects, this article is focused on to contrast i.e. God, man, universe, existence and education, are being given in detail as follow:
2. Existentialist concept of God

Existentialists are divided into two groups – Atheistic and Theistic, are definitely have different belief about God. The former denies and the latter acknowledges the existence of God. Jaspers, Kierkegaard and Marcel being Catholic Christians are theist while atheist philosophers, of the existentialist group, are Nietzsche and Jean-Paul Sartre who are leading representatives of their group.

Kierkegaard, being stanch Christian and theist, considers the knowledge of sin important for knowledge of God. He opines that burden of sins makes one reach God and no other empirical or rational proofs of God’s existence are possible. The only possibility for a knower is to be existentialist. God, the only savior, can be felt to one who will and passion cries for God. He believes in the possibility of union of individual with God and individual being still existent after the union and God is another absolute ‘Other’. Reason with faith, not mere reason, is required to believe in God. The conventional organized religion is hindrance in the way of confrontation with God he opines. The relation of God and man makes a real man he argues. His strong criticism is that he finds no evidence for the Christianity being true. For him, positive or negative evidence, if absent, is not a matter for a believer in God who has faith.

Jasper, in this connection, considers pure personal experience as the way to get aware of God. He does not attack religion but theological interpretation of language and symbols of religion. In other words, in spite of rejecting religious thought, he is a religious thinker and believes in the existence of God.

For Nietzsche, Sartre and Heidegger, God does not exist. These three are the prominent atheist existentialists. Nietzsche gets help of the science that it does not refer to any God. Nietzsche announces the God as dead. For him, with absence of God is the absence of all traditional moralities, metaphysics, life after death, Christian morality and platonic ideas. For Sartre, God does not exist and views the notion of God as self-contradictory (Gordon, 2013). He thinks religious dogmas as pure mythology. He also denies the God being source of moral values, the foundation of knowledge and being. He infers God-man relation as master-slave relationship

Sartre did not believe in God. “Atheistic existentialism, to which Sartre is one of the most important subscribers, declares that God does not exist” (Gordon, 2013)). He held that the very notion of God is self-contradictory. He devalued religious beliefs and theological dogmas to an indeterminate state of pure mythology. “For Sartre that God does not exist is a dreadful fact that makes an ultimate difference to the world and to the man” (Gordon, 2013).

Heidegger, being atheist, does not find any place of God in his scheme of thought although he does not totally deny the existence of God. He surmises God to have existence the way other beings exist.

Though atheist existentialists deny God but indirectly they hint towards God when they opine that their incomplete knowledge and limited power indicate some mysterious and unidentifiable source of being. Therefore, Flynn, (2014), deduces that atheists, while saying, God’s does not exist and if existed would have no difference for man, do not deny God but the idea of God. Similarly he declares about religious thinkers that they affirm not the idea of God but God (Gordon, 2013).

3. Existentialist concept of man

Existentialists, about concept of man, are of the view that ‘Man is’ precedes that question ‘What
is man’? For them how can someone jump to essence before existence of something (Flynn, 2014). For existentialists man is a natural existent having no essence. Man, for them, has to freely determine his own nature and not bound by any antecedent nature. Existentialists, in this way, go against the different deterministic theories of human behaviour and support, ultimately, the principle of indeterminism. Someone, if, is a man it implies he is undermined and free. Kierkegaard denies man to be specie but an existing individual. For him, man is spirit and spirit is self and self, for him, is a relation which relates itself to its own self (Gordon, 2013).

For Kierkegaard, man is alive and endeavoring to become what he chooses to be. The foremost task for man, as Kierkegaard opines, is to become subjects and to become subjective he has to choose and act with keeping in infront contingency. Man is free to choose and his not making any choice is still a choice. These choices make a man what he wants to become.

Nietzsche considers man as highly problematic in nature, the most dangerous animal with the most dangerous power of blowing himself and also the most dauntless to survive even after slaying God.

Nietzsche has faith in that demise of God has created a newer situation that would emerge a new man - he called “Superman”. Nietzsche’s superman will not surrender to rules, will of community or the mutual value rather, being individualist, he will define his personal morality and values. He held that “man is a rope stretched between the animal and superman a rope over an abyss. Man is not an end in himself, but a bridge to an end higher than himself (Flynn, 2014).

Jaspers, perhaps, is the only thinker who possesses well-defined concept of man. Jaspers rely on the notion that man cannot be truly recognized based on all objective knowledge about him. The man, for Jasper can be seen in its essence in freedom which comes through freedom of choice. Jaspers is fully himself when he exercises his freedom and in his free acts he possesses the certificate of an absolute being, he adds. He thinks man as object like other objects of the universe and subject when man realizes his inner self. Man, in his nation, life on earth, mankind and in increasing awareness of being finite, is resolute. Man, according to Jaspers, is more than what he can know about himself. He is unique in his individuality with unique interests, psychology, physical characteristics, aptitude and attitude (Jaspers, 1995).

Heidegger called man as ‘Dasein’ meaning present or awake. According to him, man is not a predefined object having fixed nature but rather he is a region or a field of ‘Being’; is beyond himself; every moment is he opening out towards his future with existence preceding his essence and condition. He is the blend of decline, self-projection and despair. Man is finite with also his moods, concern, care, depression, guilt and conscience time based. Man’s time-based aspect lead doom him to nothingness which can be defeated by free choice. The existential ontology of Heidegger is a philosophy where man's existence is attentive presence to itself, to other beings and to the world, and ultimately towards death which is an indispensable determinant of the relationship of Heidegger Dasein to Being. Man creates his own experience and is also the subject of his own experience (Dreyfus et al., 1992).

Another atheist existentialist – Sartre-considers man as free to choose but is also responsible of the consequences of his choices; is nothing but what he makes of himself; his destiny is within himself (Webber, 2008).

In short, man, for all existentialists, is an open reality; incomplete being; attached to other...
beings and world due to his nature and faces determinate situation along with his own situation. Simultaneously, man has special inter-men connection with peculiar quality of existence which Heidegger calls ‘togetherness’ and Jaspers as ‘communication’. Man is un-interpretable with essence in his lived experiences and a determiner of his own values. Every act, word or choice of man is representative of his responsible awareness of what man is.

4. Existentialist concept of universe

Universe, for existentialists, is meaningless and absurd. It is the existentialist individual that creates meaning in God-abandoned, absurd universe. Man is surrounded by an alienated, unfriendly and cruel universe; an unknown threat where man has to die one day. For existentialists what exists is the real world. For Sartre, It is a an abode of a fool having physical, chemical and material relation based all buried aimless heap of elements with man as an only element that accomplished self-consciousness. Man’s confusion, he views, is here where he has been put into a world where he has no relationship and is incompatible with. For Nietzsche, there exists no supersensible world, no lawgiver to consider eternal and no reality beyond experience. It is the human mind that constructs its own world by means of transforming, turning it into order and simplifying a meaningless world. For him there exists only subjective and private world which he calls ‘human perspectives’. He opines that man is capable to understand the world which he has made. World for him is a process having no end and no achievement.

Jaspers is of the view that the interpretation of this world must be according to the will and activity of a being that rise or excels above it. For him the reality of the universe is historical. Marcel, however, shows inability of man to understand the universe completely for he considers that man is at the moment contributing to the creation of the universe. For Marcel, man's birth is the beginning of learning to live in the world meaningfully. Heidegger considers the world a workshop of man where to ensure its presence man constructs for himself what he needs. This workshop is in the man and man is inseparable from this workshop (Flynn, 2014).

5. Existentialist concept of Existence

Existence is a supreme object of investigation for existentialists. For them it is ‘here and now’. Existence for them is the actual or occurring state of being in a given space and in a given time. They believe existence to be absolutely realistic and ‘to exist’ they prefer than the verb ‘to live’. For them existence is the growing life with reality of the adjectives self-conscious, responsible and vital. Ernest (2016) refers to the goal of existence as the formulation of one’s own philosophy about how best to live one existence. The sole aim of an individual’s life is the to discover his freedom and the most privilege part an individuals’ existence is existence. Being bored and waiting for life to satisfy us, one takes for granted one’s existence and do not gauge fortunate to have existence (Ernest, 2016).

Existentialists divide the existence into two categories that are ‘Authentic Existence’ meaning according to the will of man and ‘Inauthentic Existence’ which is imposed upon man. Every man can live an authentic or inauthentic existence i.e. to be part of imposed life or according to his freedom of choice. Existentialists opines that existence precedes essence and after existence freedom of choice ensures for an individual to what he/she wants himself/herself become (Gordon, 2013).

“Existence, is, for Kierkegaard, the attainment of self-possession in the spiritually directed and determined life of the individual” (Kierkegaard, 1967). Heidegger calls existence the empirically verifiable time-space being. For him existence is man’s substance. He does not consider death to be a separation of soul from body but an incident of human existence in it totality. (Dreyfus, 1992).
Philosophy has only one function and that is to explain of existence says Jaspers. It is not an idea but the most concrete form of experience. Existence implies transcendence. Nietzsche asserts that human existence is weird and meaningless. He wants man to over-man. One must overcome man and reach over-man. For him, God died and he wants the over-man to live Gordon, (2013). Giving unique shape to immediate passions and drives is existence for Nietzsche (Flynn, 2014). In short, existentialism has focused on various aspects of existence that are: problematic character of human situation; relationship with things and other men-dependent possibilities; the dread of death; failure; the repetition led boredom; hanging between limitations and infinite aspirations; Inter-men relationship; relationship between self and unidentified mass and authentic and inauthentic categories.

6. Existentialist concept of education

Firstly, the development of the authentic self of the child is the foremost aim of this school of thought. Nietzsche opines that the teacher should fulfill his/her duty by liberating and empowering individuals for free, creative and authentic life (Aloni, 1989). Sartre, in this connection, presented two aspects of self – self-for-itself and self-in-itself – where the former is what an individual, through efforts, becomes in life and latter is the existent status of someone at the moment. Secondly, this school of thought aims at the child’s development of self-realization capacity which Tillich calls ‘the courage to be himself’ (Kneller, 1958). Thirdly, it aims to prepare a child to face boldly the tragedies of life and at the end meet the death with pleasure (Seetharamu, 1978). Fourthly, it aims to ensure inculcation of the power of free choice making in their life. Fifthly, it aims to develop competency of the child to adjust comfortably in a particular society. Sixthly, Existentialism carries the notion of uniqueness of methods and organizations in an individual which implies its aim to develop unique personality of child. Seventhly, this school of philosophy is interested to develop the sense of responsibility in child to live an independent life and an individual is responsible for what he/she makes his/her life (Guignon, 2005).

The curriculum, as this school of thought recommends, should be liberal for the liberal learning lays the foundation of human freedom (Flynn, 2014). The subjects, though unspecified in this school of thought, can be any one that is if real tool or vehicle to keep the child involved in what he/she is endeavoring to become as this philosophy does not believe in formal curriculum. The curriculum and subjects should be chosen and sorted by the individual according to his/her needs and interest (Ozmon, 2012) and humanities must be there for the humanities improve spiritual power (Tanega, 2005).

The existentialist school is in support of Socratic Method of teaching for it is intimate, private and in it the wisdom and knowledge are attained through the interaction of two living beings (Seetharamu, 1978). Jaspers refers to the university education as ‘by nature Socratic’ for the reason that university students’ freedom of choice and responsibility is at work. To unveil the competencies of an individual, the existentialist prescribes individualized instructions. Students should be helped out in clarifying their progress towards self-actualization by the teachers (Jaspers, 1971).

In Existentialist school, school experience should be life and the individuals should be immersed in life. The learners should be engaged in dialogues with other learners and teachers to clarify progress and fulfill themselves. Along this, existentialists give importance to home for they think that educational growth cannot take place without the support of home-life. Existentialists prescribe their teacher to be an individual who should be an agent of awakening in the learners the freedom of choice and sense of responsibility along with accepting the consequences of their choice they make. Existentialist teacher, in classroom, should ensure rejoicing rather than discouraging their authenticity and motivate them to have the courage to be real ones (Kneller, 1958). Teacher-pupil relationship, for Existentialists, should be ‘I-thou’ relationship with student which implies mutuality, ineffability, presentness, Intensity and
directness. The development of one learner, as an individual, related to another learner and teacher; therefore, subject dialogues, private instruction and individual differences should never be ignored (Kramer and Gawlick, 2003).

7. Islamic Perspective

Qur’an, Hadith (sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, PBUH), Sunnah (doings of the Prophet Muhammad, PBUH reported by his followers) and opinions of Islamic jurists in the light of mentioned first three sources are the basic sources of beliefs and practices of Islam (Al-Sharif et al. 2011). Islam is a complete code of life. Think of anything and you find the way to do or how not to do. The reason behind it is that it is not a man-made but a revealed complete code of life from God Almighty brought to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) through the angel Gabriel.

8. Islamic concept of God

Allah (God) is an Arabic word for the God. In Islam, everything revolves around the entity of the God. "In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Say (O Muhammad) He is God the One God, the Everlasting Refuge, who has not begotten, nor has been begotten, and equal to Him is not anyone." (30:112) God is the first and the last, the creator and the operator and the knower of everything of the universe. Nothing in this universe if by chance but happens due to the will of the God. "God is the Creator of everything. He is the guardian over everything. Unto Him belong the keys of the heavens and the earth." (39:62 - 63)

He is wise, merciful, omnipotent and omniscient. Nothing happens against His will. But at the same time people have been given freedom of choice to act as the God advises or against it. Man is thus responsible for the consequences of his choices. "No creature is there crawling on the earth, but its provision rests on God. He knows its lodging place and it repository." (11:6) He is equally merciful to good and bad people but do not like the bad deeds people do. He has kept opened till last sigh of death the option to repent on bad deeds and come back to the right path. God, in this revealed book on Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the Qur’an explains this life on earth as test the reward of which is going to be give after death. "Do you worship what you have carved yourself?" (37:95) "Or have you taken unto you others beside Him to be your protectors, even such as have no power either for good or for harm to themselves?" (13:16) The existence of the God keeps one encourage at the time of despair for the life after death has been kept solely for the purpose of allowing the deprived good people to always live in paradise where there is no death, illness, age issue rather an ideal life which cannot be even imagined by human mind (15:45-48). God wants best for all the people in all times thus He accepts repentance before death and will keep a repenting individual in His good books. (2:160) God always fulfill his promise and He has announced that those believers who live a clean and pious life will be given pious and joyous life in this world and hereinafter. “...God would never let your faith go to waste [believers], for God is most compassionate and most merciful towards people” (2:143) Islamic concept of God makes one optimistic in both the worlds here and hereinafter. Bad times can be lived through patience while being in connection with God by acting on his prophet sayings and doings. "There is no god but He, the Living, the Everlasting. Slumber seizes Him not, neither sleep; to Him belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth. Who is there that shall intercede with Him save by His leave? He knows what lies before them and what is after them, and they comprehend not anything of His knowledge save such as He wills. His throne comprises the heavens and earth; the preserving of them oppresses Him not; He is the All-High, the All-Glorious." (2:255)

9. Islamic concept of man

Similar to the concept of God, the concept of man is crystal clear in Islam. Following words
provide of such clarity: O mankind! reverence your Guardian-Lord Who created you from a single person created of like nature his mate and from them twain scattered (like seeds) countless men and women; reverence Allah through Whom ye demand your mutual (rights) and (reverence) the wombs (that bore you): for Allah ever watches over you (4:1).

In Islamic perspective, man is responsible for the betterment of his own life and for the life of others. Being human being, man in Islam may make mistake but he should not get demotivated or affect his self-esteem rather because God says its human nature to make mistakes. God has kept open the door of returning back to right path and He is the forgiver. Islam man is supposed to learn from his mistakes and improve his relation with God and other men at the same time. Man is supposed to help other men at the time of despair and God will help those give helping hand to others. Man’s all roles, responsibilities, duties, rights have been determined in Islam which save man from bad times. God had sent complete awareness and training package for man about how to live life and how to make choice. In the holy Qur’an it is mentioned: “.......And yet among men there are such as dispute about Allah without knowledge and follow every evil one obstinate in rebellion!...........”, “About the (Evil One) it is decreed that whoever turns to him for friendship him will he lead astray and he will guide him to the Penalty of the Fire. O mankind! if ye have a doubt about the Resurrection (consider) that We created you out of dust then out of sperm then out of a leech-like clot then out a morsel of flesh partly formed and partly unformed in order that We may manifest (Our Power) to you; and We cause whom We will to rest in the wombs for an appointed term then do We bring you out as babes then (foster you) that ye may reach your age of full strength; and some of you are called to die and some are sent back to the feeblest old age so that they know nothing after having known (much). And (further) thou seest the earth barren and lifeless but when We pour down rain on it it is stirred (to life) it swells and it puts forth every kind of beautiful growth (in pairs). This is so because Allah is the Reality: it is He Who gives life to the dead and it is He Who has power over all things........ (22: 1 - 8)

10. Islamic concept of universe

About the material of the universe God says in Qur’an: “then He turned to the heaven when it was smoke.... (41: 11) and further explains in the His book “Have not those disbelieved known that the heavens and the earth were one connected entity, then We separated them? (21: 30) and about the heavenly bodies God says: “ "Blessed is He who made constellations in the sky and placed there in a lamp, and a moon giving light." (25:61). In this connection, Dr. Alfred Kroner, (2017) a renowned German professor and geologist, opines that what scientists have found last few years with advanced technology and thinking where Muhammad (Prophet, PBUH) came from .....it seems almost impossible that he could have known such things.

Regarding the purpose of the universe, God says: "We have not created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them for mere play. If We wanted to create aimless things, we would have done it if we were going to do (that)."(21: 16-17). Thus, the concept of universe is meaningful in Islamic perspective and contrary to the concept that existentialists express. The universe, if taken in the sense of world around man, has also been explained by Islamic teachings as the place of test to earn heaven or hell. Man is envoy of God on earth to follow God’s directions and finally win a completely free life full of all types of happiness – ideal life. Qur’an in revealing the purpose of this world asserts: “[He] who created death and life to test you [as to] which of you is best in deed - and He is the Exalted in Might, the Forgiving”. (67:2)

11. Islamic concept of existence

The question of human existence is being tried to answer through either philosophy or science
but it is quite unfortunate that religion has been ignored to find how man came into existence and why he has come to existence.

The glorious Qur’an, in this regard, says: “And I did not create the jinn and humans except they should worship Me”. (51: 56). This implies that the existence is for worship God Almighty and he does not worship but man, to transcend, is in need of purification and worship. In another verse of Qur’an God Almighty says: “The seven heavens and the earth and whatever is in them exalt Him. And there is not a thing except that it exalts [Allah] by His praise, but you do not understand their [way of] exalting. Indeed, He is ever Forbearing and Forgiving”. (17: 44). These verses of Qur’an are evidence that every creature of the world exalt God Almighty and man has been sent as envoy to utilize all the other creatures to help pass successfully this test and enter paradise and reach his ultimate destination.

The test of this world is further made complicated by a villainous force Qur’an call it Satan. “Satan only wants to cause between your animosity and hatred through intoxicants and gambling and to avert you from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer. So will you not desist?” (5:91). Essentially man has come to this world with a predetermined purpose of worshiping God Almighty. The resources, here in this world, are misused by men and Satan, the enemy of man provide input through his evil plans.

12. Islamic concept of education

Islam is a universal religion which gives foremost importance to education and it is evident from the Qur’an itself: “Read and your Lord is Most Honorable, who taught (to write) with the pen, who taught man what he knew not.”(96, 3-5). Furthermore, Islam gives priority to learned ones over the illiterates the instance of which is the Qur’anic chapter Al, Zumr, verse 9 where God Almighty says: “Are those equal, those who know and those who do not know?” Regarding education, mainly there are used three Arabic terms: ‘ta’lim’, ‘tarbiya’ and ‘taadib’ that mean to know, to rear and to be cultured respectively (Cook, 1999).

In Islamic perspective Man is the combination of soul and body which implies man being spirit and matter simultaneously. Being bearer of both heart (qalb) and intellect (‘aql) and carrying the spiritual and rational competency, man possess the most significant gift of knowledge which is related to both spiritual and also tangible and intelligible realities. (Al-Attas, 1979). Islamic context presents education to be a process of engaging a person completely by involving his/her rational, social and spiritual dimensions. Islam, being complete code of life, presents a holistic development model for man. It endeavors for a harmonious and balanced personality of the individual; this holistic and balanced development is deeply rooted in the concept of ‘Tawhid’. The focus is on balanced development of overall personality by training spirit, rational self, intellect, emotions and human senses through inculcating faith in overall personality” (Al-Attas 1979).

In Islamic educational theory the general objective of gaining knowledge is the actualization and perfection of all dimensions of the human being. Islam guides, through education, an individual towards achieving excellence and realization of all potentials. In Islam, man is the vicegerent of God Almighty and to prove it man submits himself fully to God Almighty (Abdullah, 1982). For the highest good of man existence is the total submission to God which as revealed in Qur’an: “I have not created jinn and mankind except to worship Me” (51: 56). Islamic aim of education, reach perfection, is possibly only after total submission to God. Though, education in Islamic perspective, guide man for a happy life in this world but its ultimate aim is to help man excel in the test-based life of this world and win permanent happiness in the world hereinafter” (Nasr, 1984). Education cannot be separated from
spiritual life and the perfect model of teachings for man is the Qur’an and Sunnah of the holy prophets (PBUH). The life of the prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and Qur’anic message from God Almighty is the absolute source for temporal and spiritual life. (Al-Saud 1979).

Today Ummah’s straying from God Almighty’s prescribed course and from the true Islamic education have caused the erosion of spiritual and moral foundations of Islamic world.

To conclude, education in Islam is the process of the combination of acquiring intellectual knowledge and spiritual knowledge. And the sources for these processes are application of reason and logic and revelation and spiritual experience respectively (Cook, 1999)

13. Implications/Recommendations for Muslim teachers and students of education

Keeping in view the account of Existentialism and Islam as presented above, following are the recommendations for the teachers and students of Education:

- Islam is a universal religion for all times and people and thus never asks for any fruitful aspect of other theories as long such theories/philosophies do not go against the beliefs of Islam.
- The role of genetic inheritance cannot be ignored while Existentialism presents the notion that essence is second to existence.
- Atheistic ideology of Atheist Existentialists is totally against the Islam beliefs which the Muslim teachers of education must explain openly to their students.
- Existentialism defines life and existence having no essence and purpose until man himself choose the purpose of life. While Islam is not man-made rather it is a revealed religion which has given the way of hope in all walks of life and essence cannot be understood until man is not connected with God through the ways of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).
- For education there is no clear-cut policy, curriculum and teaching method from Existentialism. All that have been presented above has been deduced from the Existentialist philosophy.
- Existential, particularly after Second World War, is the philosophy of disappointment where man has been shown dropped into the world of meaninglessness and life, being absurd and purposeless.
- Before teaching Existentialism and particularly Atheistic model, Muslim teachers and students must be clear about Islamic beliefs which will help them avoid polluting their own universal beliefs of both the worlds.
- Existentialism lacks any ethical aspect in itself to guide man. Freedom of adopting values and ethics contradicts the equality and equity system for human beings.
- Freedom has not been defined by existentialists, neither its limits nor boundaries. In this regard, man, if left totally free will never be in the position to finalize the purpose of his life because all men are interring related and all will ask for freedom of their own choice. Thus, like American maxim of “your freedom ends where my nose starts” will direct such people then.
- In short, the positive aspects of Existentialism may be availed but after passing them through the true Islamic lens. Existentialism is a part and Islam is a whole and encompasses all fields and walks of life, therefore, part should not guide the whole but the whole should guide the part by purifying it and refining it with the sense of holistic good of all the men.

References


Cook, B. J. (199). Islamic versus Western education conceptions: Reflections on Egypt, International review on education. DOI: 10.1023/A: 1003808525407


