

Dr Vahid Sohrabifar

An Existential Interpretation of the Qur'ān: Meaning of Life

In this paper, first, I discuss the existential approach to interpreting the Quran. This includes the objective of this approach and its difference from other approaches. Studying the Quran from an existential perspective is based on consideration of human conditions and their existential concerns like meaning, life, death, loneliness, freedom, etc. The outset of this modern perspective is the needs of human beings today and has a different purpose from historical, etymological, or theological perspectives.

This approach entails some hermeneutical presupposition. It assumes that the text has meaning in response to a question and since questions may vary from time to time, it can relate to different concerns through the ages. In this view, the center of gravity is human concerns today.

One of the widespread concern of our time is the problem of absurdity and the question of meaning of life. I will then discuss the meaning of life in the Quranic teachings as an example of the existential approach. Building upon a greater image of existence, the Quran offers a normative view of meaningful life. In the Quranic view, humans should pursue a pure life "*Hayat Tayyibah*", a life that has certain goals and is not a pointless game. This goal has been described in a variety of ways, e.g. worshipping God, being a good servant, and gaining knowledge. In this view, there is an existential connection between humans and God. The more humans get closer to God, the more they find meaning, purpose, joy and if they forget their origin, they are on the way to fall. The Quran describes humans as travelers, traders, examinees, etc. These metaphors make the view of the Quran more accessible and comprehensible for all. They inspire humans to lead a meaningful life.

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Dr Vahid Sohrabifar

University of Religions & Denominations

Dr Vahid Sohrabifar is a scholar in religious studies, philosophy of religion, and interfaith dialogue. He earned his PhD from the University of Religions and Denominations (URD) in Qom, Iran, focusing on Charles Taylor and the impact of modernity on spirituality. He also holds degrees in Religious and Islamic Studies.

Currently the Dean of the Faculty of Religions at URD and President of the Iranian Association for Religious Studies, Dr Sohrabifar was formerly the Dean of the Department of Philosophy of Religion and a research fellow in comparative theology at the University of Bonn.

He has authored several books and articles on rationality, spirituality, and religious diversity, engaging both Islamic and Western thought. A recipient of research fellowships from institutions such as DAAD and the World Council of Churches, he regularly presents at international conferences on modernity, Shi'a studies, and interfaith dialogue. He is fluent in Persian, English, and Azeri.