CHAPTER II

JASPERS’ CONCEPT OF HUMAN CONDITION AND TEMPORALITY

Analysis of human existence

Nobody can deny that man is a marvelous and multi-dimensional being. But when we come to the question as to what is man or what is human existence, it is not easy to answer. So the problem of what is man becomes one of the most difficult and fundamental problems in philosophy. There have been different disciplines such as Anthropology, Psychology, Philosophy and Religion, which attempt to understand and study man. As such, man can be seen from different dimensions such as psycho-physical, social, spiritual and transcendent.

As physical existence, man is a material being, whose body acts on the material environment and is conditioned by it. In common with all the beings of nature he has a physical body composed of basic elements, which grows, decays, and interacts with other processes, in common with plants, man is animated by a moving principle that nourishes and reproduces itself. With other animals man is endowed with sensory organs, which enable him to direct his acts by an awareness of external things, and his own pleasure and pain. Man, thanks to the advance of science, can also be copied or cloned in the same way as other things in the world. In this dimension he is viewed as a tiny physical process lost in the vast encompassing space to the universe. He is a living being in the large stage of a protracted planetary evolution.¹

As psychological existence, man is a being with a mind of his own, capable of looking backward into the past and forward into the future. He can be observed and investigated through his behaviour by means of scientific procedures. In other words, though man has a private world of his own, which is closed to the public eyes, he is subject to study and investigation on the basis of his behaviour like other living beings.

As social and political being, man lives in groups, needs the leader, and struggles for existence, fame and status. He makes rules of law for all to follow. As spiritual being, man seeks comfort in religion or faith which gives him peace of mind.

According to Jaspers, the above dimensions have presented only objective aspect of man, which does not exhaust his being, for man is not merely a biological, psychological and social being; he is always more than what he knows about himself. And this 'more' indicates the immense possibilities of man, which does not succumb to scientific inquiry. As Jaspers writes:

Indeed, we have better knowledge of all those things we ourselves are not; what man is, is perhaps less clear to him than anything else he encounters. He becomes for himself the greatest of all mysteries when he senses that despite his finite nature, this position seems to extend into the infinite.²

Jaspers holds that scientific disciplines like biology, physiology etc. fail to grasp the potentialities of man, that is, freedom and transcendence. Of course, these disciplines have brought many kinds of knowledge about man, but they do not provide us with the knowledge of man as whole.

Jaspers proposes to study man in another perspective, which he calls the existential dimension. He holds that basically man can be studied in at least two ways, either as an object of inquiry, which is accomplished through the scientific disciplines as mentioned above, or as Existenz which eludes the empirical inquiry of science.\(^3\) The first approach may be called empiricist or rationalist and the second existentialist.

Jaspers points out that as object of inquiry man is empirical existence, which can be examined in terms of disciplines such as biology, psychology, physiology as mentioned above. It should be noted here that at present the knowledge of man in the field of biology becomes so advanced that it can tell us almost every part of our organisms and their interrelation; cloning can be operated on man within a few minutes.

Moreover, Jaspers himself admires the great deal of contribution made by the scientists for the understanding of man. But he argues that man, as a whole can never become a subject of scientific investigation. Science tells us a particular dimension of man and thereby leading to the neglect of man himself. As a result, it undermines the significance of human freedom. Jaspers emphasizes that man is not merely the object of knowledge but also of faith in quest for Transcendence.\(^4\) For him, there is something in man,

\(^3\) Ibid p. 56
\(^4\) Ibid. p. 64
which is not demonstrable, never be an object and evades all scientific enquiries; that is freedom.

Thus, Jaspers takes a new approach in his dealing with the problem of human existence, which is called the ‘existential’, it can look at man in a more comprehensive way than a scientific method. Jaspers holds that science can give only a partial and one-sided picture of man. As he writes:

Each of us for himself is certain of what man is, in the way that precedes scientific research and also comes after it. This is the prerogative of our freedom, which knows itself bound up with agent knowledge, but is not included in it as an object of cognition. For in so far we make ourselves the object of scientific inquiry, we see no freedom, but factuality, finitude, form, relation, causal necessity.  

From the statement outlined above, it can be said that though scientific knowledge gives a credible explanation to what man is, it is always particular and refers to definite, finite objects, while man as a whole or a potential being cannot be comprehended through scientific knowledge. This is because all empirical causalities and biological processes would seem to apply to man’s material substratum not to himself.  

Science makes man specialized in numerous disciplines, yet at the same time it leads to a neglect of the image of man.

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5 Ibid. p. 62
6 Ibid. p. 61
Moreover, Jaspers argues that if our research were focused only on human dimension as object of inquiry, it would lead to the polarity of subjective and objective dimensions of man. That is, if we look at man only from the angle of empirical existence which can be clearly explained and investigated in the same way as other objects, then we may jump to the conclusion that only what present to our intellect or cognition is real, and that whatever lies outside cognition is unreal, or else we may assume that in the world-orientation nothing can be trusted or relied upon, everything depends on our ideas, no rules or laws are required, we can do whatever we want to do because man is the measure of all things.

For Jaspers, the polarity of subjectivity and objectivity may land us in either nihilism or sophistry. In other word, sciences conceive man as an empirical object, which can be thoroughly studied and investigated. It leads us to a pure objectivity. Idealism, by contrasts, looks at man as an abstract and rational being, whose essence is the absolute idea. It may lead us to a radical subjectivity. So the question is; what Jaspers means by the terms subjectivity and objectivity?

Subjectivity is for Jaspers human condition, which enables us to perceive and integrate the object of perception into some definite idea through the power of mind. This dimension makes us aware that we are conscious being that reckons whatever happens or appears to us. It may also relate to one’s personal inward awareness and certainty that we can explain in terms of the vital urge or self-will to exist.

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8 Ibid. p. 298
However, subjectivity can be seen in yet another three-fold dimension, namely, consciousness as such, individual consciousness and validity. As consciousness as such, a subject is not a concrete individual but a mere abstract thinking that is aimed at objects. As individual consciousness, a subject is the individual existence can be empirically examined. In this dimension, human existence has an arbitrary self-will and a vital urge to exist. And as validity, a subject is a rational being, who is endowed with the cogent insight and idea. These three dimensions have the objective forms of their own; consciousness as such has form of objectivity at large, individual existence the form of endless diversity, and validity the form of reason and idea.  

Thus, it can be said that subjectivity is internal part of the thinking I, which is indefinite and unclear unless it is clarified in objectivity. In other words, my hidden inwardness will not be real for me unless it is outwardly objectified; but it acknowledges or translates a mere objective into subjective reality. That is to say, there would be no truth if I do not grasp it; subjectivity becomes a moving force within me, which is not downright communicable. It is feeling and experience as such, without content and without object. It is the endless random course of accidental individuality, the obscurity of consciousness, lack of clarity, the ineffable and merely possible. Man with a sense of subjectivity may turn himself against the world and live in isolation.

As subjectivity, man is able to perceive and interpret the object of perception into some definite idea through the power of mind. Subjectivity is therefore the state that strikes man to his own personal inward awareness

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9 This interpretation has been given in the light of Jasper’s exposition on a concept of subjectivity as developed in his ‘Philosophy Vol. II’ (p. 298), it paves the way for the idea of the Encompassing, which Jaspers elaborated in ‘Reason and Existenz’, pp. 52-76.
and certainty that he exists because he has the vital urge or self-will to exist. As subjective man creates ideas and organizes the some ideas through his acts of mind, he can form and retain the idea of what is real. In short, man as subjectivity is a creative being. "Without this creative subjectivity no objectivity will come into existence". However, pure subjectivity is not possible because it requires objectification, that is, the subject would be empty and go astray if there is not object as its content. "We are always confronted outwardly or inwardly by objects, which are the content of our consciousness." The next question is; what is objectivity according to Jaspers?

Objectivity, according to Jaspers, means something that is external and quite distinct from the individual as a concrete conscious subject. It is the thing that we perceive or think of, be it visible objects, ideal objects, or even imaginary objects. In other words, objectivity can be something other than I who perceive or think of it, or it can be "me" whom "the subject I" brings to its consciousness. As Jaspers clearly states:

There is no such I, because whenever there is an "I" there are objects for it – not objects of inference, but objects of the some immediate certainty which that "I" thought it had for itself. The "I" that knows it exists is as one with the real objects. Neither is without the other.

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10 Ibid. p. 299
11 Jaspers, Way to wisdom, p. 30
12 Jaspers, Philosophy, Vol. II. p. 299
In corresponding to subjectivity, objectivity also can be viewed in three aspects, as the realm of objects, validity and the whole idea. As the realm of object, it is an existential possibility. I can adopt whatever comes to be an object in the world as empirical reality, as rational validity, as nature and history. As reason, objectivity is the "ought" that is universal and applicable to all without exception. As the whole idea, it is the existence of a world that rounds itself into a substantial idea, which is tied to a fixed form. It may be noted here that the terms such as objectivity, externality, validity and idea, according to Jaspers are interrelated.

Thus, it can be said that objectivity is something, which the subject is conscious of, something, which we think of, which we recognize as valid. That is to say, objectivity is associated with externality. It may be attributed to an objective reality, to the law of nature known through experience and observation. For instance, we realize that the natural or chemical laws that sustain or govern the existence of a physical object also pertain to objectivity because our cognizance of such objective laws enables us to grasp the nature or properties of that object. Objectivity is also what a subject recognizes as valid or real in the form of idea or conventional rule known to the individual.

Moreover, Jaspers points out that objectivity can manifests itself in various forms such as society, state, religion and culture, each of which can be explained as follows;

Society: as the form of objectivity, it plays very important role in bringing about human welfare. It refers to the reality of the human world, which offers us the living conditions and the necessary tradition to build and shape our lives. "To plunge into the objectivity of society is a condition for
This is true because we would concede that no man could really survive outside society. It is through the form of service that we enter into society. This occurs through work i.e. labour, which definitely assists in the maintenance of the society as an organic whole.

Jaspers holds that the service that one renders may in one way or another encourage the other person to perform the service that one needs. In other words, it is through mutual understanding and joint efforts in our diverse endeavour or enterprises that each member of society would derive the anticipated benefit of co-existence. It is apparent therefore that existential relevance of society lies in providing us the opportunity to serve one another through our diverse trades and occupations.

Moreover, Jaspers points out that man always lives with the knowledge of universally valid moral rules prevalent in the society, which he may break or surpass, but cannot ignore. Since moral rules lack the power of compulsion that legal tenets possess, it is up to man to make a decision whether to recognize it or not.

The state: it is the form of objectivity that provides and assures us of the safeguards and liberties. This is because man usually wants to use power to transform into institutions what he considers lasting and just in order to establish the foundations for a future of mankind. Hence, the state is the form of objectivity that leads to create the real fate or future of man. That is, it can provide the opportunity to create something useful for mankind.

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13 Ibid. p. 327
14 Ibid. p. 328
However, this will be materialized only when one existentially acknowledges reality and hold himself responsible for what he does. However, the state may harm the future of man if it only clings to powers without being concerned with the others. Thus, even the state is necessary condition for shaping or creating the fate of mankind, it is up to man as possible Existenz to choose whether to participate or not.

Religion: it is the form of objectivity that relates man to transcendence. It normally plays a very important role in bringing peace, harmony and moral rules to mankind. But sometimes it also leads to a conflict, when man does not existentially live with it. He does not follow the true spirit of his own religion. It must be noted that Jaspers does not confine the concept of religion only to religion in the form of institutions like Church or Temple, he regards it as a personal matter, one is free to believe in it or reject it.

The concept of religion has already been discussed in the previous chapter. Here suffice it to say that religion can fulfill the spiritual need of man, especially those who are not satisfied with material needs but looking something more, that is, freedom and transcendence.

Culture: it is the way by which man understands himself through works of art, language, tools and so on. It is as diverse as the activities of comprehension and production that range from the practical processing of things to creations, from individual performance to the institutions and society as whole. So it is from our ability to reason and act that we can speak of the concept of culture at all. As Jaspers puts it:
Culture is the creation of this intelligibility in action, knowledge and works, and in languages as our universal ways of making ourselves understood.\textsuperscript{15}

Thus, it may be said that culture is regarded as the means to acquire the knowledge necessary for the mutual understanding of our global neighbours. It may also refer to the degree of intellectual development in human community, which would include our activities and achievement in science, art, literature, philosophy, religion, education and so on. The relevance of culture to man is that it can put us in the situation in which we may become conscious of our freedom. That is, one is able to choose to submit to society or ignore these and creates fresh manners of social and economic endeavours. Culture provides us, therefore, the opportunity to understand how to coexist with others and improve through communication one’s knowledge of man and the world.

These four forms of objectivity pave that way for man to analyze his potentialities. Left to themselves, these forms will disintegrate from each other unless they have been fixed by the Existenz. It may be noted that these forms are not the only ways, for objectivity can be manifested in the endless forms.

Subjectivity and objectivity discussed so far represent the empirical dimension of man. Though both appear to be in the opposite poles, they are not totally separated from each other. Here arises a question; what does unify subjectivity and objectivity?

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid. p. 308
Jaspers clearly points out that it is Existenz that unifies the subjective-objective division of man. The polarity of subjectivity and objectivity is only the dimensions of Existenz. It should not, therefore be seen as the appearance of some strange object, which exists somewhere underlying any reflection. For Jaspers, the problematic of Existenz is that we cannot comprehend it either as object or subject. He writes:

Attempts to comprehend it make it vanish, for it is not a psychological subject. I feel deeply rooted in its possibility than in my self-objectifying grasp of my nature and my character."16

At this point, Jaspers distinguishes between Existenz and existence as follows; man’s existence is finite, and empirical. It is wholly temporal and finite. As empirical existence, man is a closed chapter, as he can be characterized in a fixed form. Existenz, on the other hand, reveals man’s endless possibilities. As Existenz, man is synthesis of infinite, temporal and eternal, for he may be limited to time, yet he in time is more than time. Existenz is characterized in terms of freedom and transcendence. As existence, man is general and universal because he can generally be seen and observed by everyone; he is endowed with intellect and may be explained in terms of common properties of human beings. But Existenz is never general. It cannot be subsumed as particular under the universal.

So, one cannot hope for a straightforward answer but there is possibility of getting the answer by reflection on Jaspers’ description of Existenz. He clearly points out that it is not empirical existence that is Existenz, but being human. Man is possible Existenz in existence. This is

16 Jaspers, Way to wisdom, Ibid. p. 3
not to say that there are two separate and distinguished existences, namely, existence on the one hand and Existenz on the other, since in reality we cannot separate Existenz from mundane existence.

As empirical existence, I am not creative. But I as Existenz can take a step toward being or away from being toward nothingness in every choice and decision. Man is lack of substance, but has potentiality to be everything. This is the reason why Jaspers says that man is always more than what he can know himself to be.

**Temporality and Historicity**

According to Jaspers, the reason why Existenz cannot be categorized into any fixed form, because it is always in time and situation. The fact that man is a being in time is called temporality and that he is always in situation is regarded as historicity. The problem of time is the fundamental problem of human existence. Jaspers argues that time by itself is nothing, but it is the form in which all reality exits, in modifications not to be derived from one another.\(^{17}\) He points out that time is the succession of present instants from the past into future and can be of various kinds such as physical, psychological, historical and existential.

The term ‘temporality’ according to Jaspers, implies change, finitude of human existence and man’s involvement in the world which gives him joy as well as suffering. In other words, temporality implies a certain persistence of the past and certain duration of the subject. But it is neither merely objective nor purely subjective; we may call it memory or a mere awareness of time. It concerns all of us. Hence, it is inseparable from

\(^{17}\) Jaspers, Philosophy Vol. III, p. 50
consciousness. Time, in this sense, Jaspers calls existential time. Thus, time for him can be viewed in the following ways:

(1) Physical time: It is an objectivity rooted in the determination of measurable time units, and it remains the skeleton of all other real time. So, we can see that since the prehistorically period of humanity, man has experienced time in connection with the cyclical periods within himself and in the outside world.

(1) Psychological time: It can be described as our natural way to experience time and also in the psychology of estimates of and delusions about time, comparing a subjective view of time with an objective time.

(3) Historical time: it is chronology based on the skeleton of objectivity of existence wherein different events take place. It is time that always has inner structures, a beginning, middle and an end. It is not just a qualitative sequence.

4) Existential time: It can be elucidated in decision and in the moment, in the sense of irreversibility in dealing with beginning and end.\textsuperscript{18}

It is the time in the last sense that Jaspers keeps in mind when he is talking about temporality. Here the basic phenomenon of time is seen in the ‘now’. Yet, the present is not a mere ‘now point’ it is the moment in the fashion of all time. In this sense, human existence is to be understood in the light of man’s temporality of the not yet, the no longer, the here and now. It is not being captured by the present but always having a view towards both the future and the past.

Temporality is said to be the source of human finitude in the sense that it helps us to recognize the situation-bound character of human existence since human existence is being in situation. And what is situation?

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid. p. 50
Is it a determinate objective fact even if it is extremely complex or an inescapable choice? These questions will be discussed when we deal with the concept of boundary situation. Hence, the term temporality is used to connote both the fact of change and finitude of phenomenal existence as a structure of world involvement.

The problem of human existence and the temporal structure of the world constitution must be related with the structuring of temporality. This position seeks to avoid the two extremes of situating man in time or placing man totally transcendent of time. The two alternatives in a sense exemplify the two approaches to time, which may be described in conventional terms, that of realism and idealism respectively. The first position is prepared to grant temporal structure an independent reality of its own, with a view to subsume human existence under a category. The second alternative makes temporal structure a mere act of consciousness, denying any reality status to the objectivity of temporal becoming. In either case, consciousness of temporality becomes problematic. In the first case because time is transcendent to consciousness, and in the second case because consciousness is transcendent to time. How to avoid from falling in the above positions?

Jaspers points out that the intermediary position operates with the datum of the temporal process as the datum for a cognizing consciousness. In this sense, it partakes the character both of realism and idealism. It seeks to retain the significant element of the first alternative that in effect situates the subject in the present. The situating of the world-involved subject in the present is a necessary condition for the temporal experience that the subject will have. The access to past or future must be gained not by abandoning the
present but rather out of the present. Present becomes the meeting ground of past and future.

Jaspers' conception of temporality aims at bringing our attention to the fact that though human being is bound by time and situation, he has a capacity to transcend them. He says, "Existenz is neither timelessness nor temporality as such. It is one within the other, nor one without the other."\(^{19}\) Moreover, he argues that Existenz is a unifying ground of the moment, during the present into a fulfillment that carries past and future within itself and is diverted to neither of them. Hence, to be human being is to be in between time and eternity.

Jaspers emphasizes that the moment as a mere moment of particle of temporality is in flux. Because of temporality, human existence is always in the process of becoming. As a result, the link between temporality and historicity could be comprehended in this way: One can create fresh situations in which he plans to execute a particular course of action, though, of course, he cannot get out of one situation without entering into another. Why is it so? It is because even one has made an attempt to change, modify or bring a situation or condition of things under control, he will never accomplish it once and for all, as he will face another situation. This is the reason why Jaspers says we are always bound to face new situations. Here arises a question: What is historicity according to Jaspers?

He clearly points out that first of all one should keep in mind the distinction between the sense of history and historicity. It is generally accepted that history is a record of significant events or happenings. It deals with all that occurred in the past and know what really happened. The aim

\(^{19}\) Ibid. p. 110
of history is to expose the relevant features of past human activities in society; how people lived in the past, their economic and social values, aspirations, accomplishments, the achievements of great historic figures, the problems encountered by such individuals in the course of their endeavors and the role of the masses in the development of human society. In short, history enables us to know the important events in past human communities, civilizations or nations.

In knowledge of history, history is reduced to an object since it is normally seen as a vast process in which everything has its place and taste. From this it follows that man cannot act otherwise because the definite possibilities of the present is already known through the past and thus man is not fully conscious of himself as a free agent who is not bound by the limited possibilities in similar past circumstances.

However, knowledge of history can pave the way for a sense of historicity if we regard it as the ‘raw material’ for communication in a moment of freedom. In this sense, history is necessary for historicity or existential historical consciousness. In the historical point of view, man is not himself as free individual but as consciousness at large, a knowing subject, which is separated from the object of knowledge of history. As Jaspers puts it:

The knowledge of history aims at public affairs, at political and social matters, at institution and customs, at words and results. It does not exist for me as this specific individual but a case of mankind today. In this knowledge, I am not myself as an individual. I am consciousness at
large, a knowing subject apart from the object I know.  

Historicity, on the other hand, is concerned with individual existential historic consciousness which helps each of us to realize that for a man as Existenz, everything is possible regardless of what history reveals. It is personal in its origin. Though historicity may deal with historical record, it goes beyond a mere knowledge of history. That is to say, it represents the subjective awareness or innate quality of our mind, which enables us to think that though we are linked with the past, we are not, bound by what history speaks as we can make decisions or commitments, which are related to the present. In the sense of historicity, the individual relates the past and future to the present moment, being aware that this moment remains open for one’s possibility.

Historicity therefore makes us thoroughly conscious of our sense of freedom. For even the present situation is connected with the past events, we are not always determined by uncertain information about the future. Jaspers writes:

Determinacy is the historic form in which Existenz appears in time, a form that always contains the given and acquired necessities not constantly thrown into question... As my historicity makes me most clearly conscious of my freedom, it reveals in the end that existence at

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large is not finally decided either, but is still in the process of decision.\textsuperscript{21}

Thus, it may be said that in historic consciousness of Existenz, one is neither enslaved by the past nor lost in the known accuracies and utopias that are ineffectual and void. Hence, the knowledge of history, though it is indispensable factor for understanding human existence, is not adequate as it fails to bring the unique individual into consideration.

The concept of historicity can never be reached by logical deductions or abstract sequences, and that which can only be pointed at by a limiting concept, is the core of Existenz, which is embodied concretely in the world. Since Existenz eludes a fixation by universal maxims and any integration into a system, it signifies that historicity is a link of situation and freedom, which cannot be understood by means of universally valid dogma, nor can it be integrated into a system of revelations. For Jaspers, the truth of thought is not separable from the man who thinks, whose temporal situation and biography will determine the intensity and profundity of his insight into Being.

Thus, the concepts of historicity and temporality are interlinked. Jaspers clearly points out that the concept of historicity is caused by the instability of things in time. Yet, it is not a mere passing of things that we observe in the process of nature. Historicity relates the present to the past and to the future so as to penetrate mere temporality in continuous communication. Since the individual is an exclusively being, unique and concrete, finite and temporal, historicity expresses the limitation and dimension of depth, which attaches to man's being in time.

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid. p. 110
Hence, historicity and temporality stand not only for the unity of the individual for personal human existence within the empirical world but also for the synthesis of freedom and necessity and for the union of time and eternity. Jaspers remarks:

As my historicity makes me most clearly conscious of my freedom, it reveals in the end that existence is not finally decided either, but is still in the process of decision… The consciousness that there is no given fact without freedom and no freedom without given facts, makes me respect reality as such and at the same time keeps me boundlessly ready to take everything and saturate it with possibility.\(^22\)

It should be noted that when Jaspers says that historicity provides the link between time and eternity, he means that the term eternity is not timelessness or countless series of moments. Hence, we can take only one decision in time in which the past and future are consciously linked to the temporal decision. The link between temporality and historicity makes us aware of how to fulfill the temporal ‘now’ through freedom. It shows that our being has transcendental dimensions, which enable us to look back to distant past and anticipate future. So both temporality and historicity help us fulfill the ‘moments yet to come’ meaningfully through each temporal decision that we make in our life.

\(^{22}\) Jaspers, Karl. Philosophy Vol. II. p.110
Boundary Situations

From the concept of temporality and historicity as mentioned in the previous section, it is evident that man is finite; that is, he exits in time and confines to a particular situation. However, as a possible Existenz man has a potentiality to raise himself above such a finitude by bringing it to his own awareness and making it a condition for transcendence. It should be noted here that finitude, whether being in time or situation, is according to Jaspers an essential characteristic of human condition. Generally speaking, human finitude means (i) that man is always in situation or condition, which he himself does not choose (ii) that in this condition there are alternative possibilities open to man, which he must choose but (iii) such a choice always has consequences not anticipated by the chooser himself.23

According to Jaspers, human finitude may be briefly outlined into three main points: First, man, like all other living beings, is dependent upon his environment, upon nourishment and sensory contents, he is exposed to the natural process; he is temporal and eventually must die.

Second, man is dependent on other men, on the historical world even at the risk of his own being. This is because we cannot take anything for granted in this world; the fruits of fortune come and go. Reliance is possible only when each of us is loyal and sincere. Yet, this cannot be calculated, since what one relies on is not objective or demonstrable reality.

Third, man is dependent on his cognition for understanding of the world, which can give him only a particular and partial picture of reality.24

24 See Jaspers, The perennial scope of philosophy, pp. 64-65
It must be noted that for Jaspers, such terms as 'finitude', 'facticity', limit or boundary 'situation', are one and the same. Jaspers distinguishes between situation and boundary or ultimate situations as follows:

(1) Situation: It is the reality that confronts the subject involved in virtue of his givenness (Dasein), which either restricts him or opens fresh vistas for him. Jaspers says:

A situation is not only something, which conforms to natural law but is to also a meaningful reality, which is neither psychical nor physical, but as a concrete reality, is both together.\(^{25}\)

Thus, the situation may bring about advantage or hindrance, opportunity or limitation for my existence; it can be created or altered. In this context, human existence is always in situation. Jaspers further points out that as existence man is so completely interfused with the situation in which "I now find myself, in which I act or permit myself "to drift."\(^{26}\) Man can never know situation completely, that is, only a man who stands outside of this situation, someone else or I myself in retrospect – can survey it more fully, though never of course, in all of its possibilities. We may be able to transform or modify situation if we are aware of it in advance. Unfortunately, it often eludes our attention, or at best, we know only a certain part of it. The moment we recognize one situation, the other situation may take place. This leads us to act in a different manner.

\(^{25}\) Jaspers, Karl. Philosophy Vo. II, p. 177
\(^{26}\) ibid. p. 177
In other words, a situation can be transformed or changed in such a way that we are able to calculate and manipulate what we are going to act in the given situations. We can create a situation in politico-economic action for example, in which we do not proceed directly towards a goal, but we rather bring about the situation from which it will arise. As Jaspers says:

Situations exist insofar as they change. But although I can change the given situation, and calculatingly introduced desired I cannot leave one situation without entering into another, because existence is being in situation, the consequence of whatever I do will confront me as a new situation which I helped to bring about, and which is not given.  

(2) Boundary or ultimate situation: It is the situation that which leads to the limit of what I and in principle everyone else as consciousness as such can know, That is to say, it cannot be comprehended by consciousness as such, but only by Existenz. Jaspers writes:

Situations such as - that I am always in situations, that I cannot live without conflict and suffering, that I avoidably incur guilt and that I must die- I call ultimate situations. There is no way to survey them in existence. They never change, except in their appearance. With respect to our existence they are ultimate. In our existence we see nothing

\footnote{Ibid. p. 178}
else behind them. They are like a wall we run into, and upon which we founder.\textsuperscript{28}

Unlike concrete situations, the ultimate situations are beyond our control; we can only bring them to our awareness without our being able to explain or deduce them from anything else. Jaspers emphasizes that ultimate situations are part and parcel of existence itself, that is, to exist is to be in the ultimate situations.

(1) \textbf{Situation as such} – The fact that we are always in a particular situation, we are unique, not the entirety of all possibilities, we are bound to time indicates the situationality or facticity of man. Take for instance, I exist in certain social circumstances at a certain time in history, I am a man or a woman, younger or old, directed by opportunities or chances. Situation as such is called the boundary situation because it limits each individual to a particular place, time and social position, we cannot escape from the here and now. The possibilities that we actualize may exclude the opportunities or chances of the others. In other words, the situation inhibits human existence in innumerable ways so much so that man finds himself at the mercy of mere chance. Jaspers writes:

\begin{quote}
What is become, what task I set myself, depends upon opportunities. The course of my development depends upon initial social and economic circumstances, which are due to pure chance. My love for companion of my life
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid. p. 178
depends on the accident of our meeting in existence.\textsuperscript{29}

However, he emphasizes that though situation or chance is something we can do nothing about because a lot of accidents swirl around us, it is up to each of us to decide whether to see them or fail to notice, whether to seize them or let them pass. That is to say, the course of action man has taken is not entirely up to him alone, but is dependent upon chance or accident as well. To evade uncertainty I may take a comfort in the law of necessity that can assure me that nothing occurs by chance but by necessity. Yet, it is up to me again to choose whether to accept this necessity or to outwit it, making it no longer necessary.

For Jaspers, to exist without a definite situation is merely empty conception. As a result, man cannot escape chance or situation; while trying to avoid one situation, he ends up in another. He observes:

It is in situation that I am myself, as the phenomenal body of what I can be, in the boundary situation, transcending any comprehensible thought, I experience myself-shaken, first, and then as one with chance, which I take to be mine.\textsuperscript{30}

(2) \textbf{Death}: It is a boundary or ultimate situation because it will certainly befall over each and every one of us without exception. But just taking a notice of death as an objective fact that will happen to us some day is not a boundary situation according to Jaspers. He believes that only man knows he is going to die but such kind of knowledge would rather lead him

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid. p. 190
\textsuperscript{30} Ibid. p. 191
to avoid it than to face it. As a mere empirical existence, man tends to seek and search for duration and permanence for what is dear to him. When the thing he loves is destroyed or passed away, he ends up with suffering. I know that I myself, or a person who is near and dear to me, will die some day, but it is a hard fact to accept.

So to preserve myself or my dear one I may try to do everything to prevent death by counseling with a doctor or by taking the best medicine. But this is not what Jaspers keeps in mind when he talks of death as a boundary situation, for him, in boundary situation death become historic, not general. For Jaspers, a man who merely lives forgets that the end of life is inevitable; he looses the sense of historicity that assure that human existence is phenomenal in time.\(^{31}\)

However, Jaspers points out that though death is a part of life which cannot be changed, we as possible Existenz can employ the existential attitude towards it, that is, since I know I will disappear in a certain point of time I must attach absolute importance to realization and decision in time. Yet, he warns that in doing so one must neither passively observe the disappearance nor actively bring it about, what one should do is to adopt it inwardly. For him, death is the disappearance of Existenz, that is, if there were no death, then man’s being would be an endless duration rather than Existenz. Thus, one should neither wish for nor fear of it. The sense of Existenz is lost if man absolutizes his being as if it were being- in- self. When he gets involved in it, he remains nothing but existence and start alternating between obliviousness and fear.

As existence, I exist phenomenally, but in this phenomenon, I am more than an empirical existence. As existence I cannot help suffering under

\(^{31}\) Ibid. p. 193
the end, but as assured Existenz. I can overcome it, that is, keep control of it. Hence, Jaspers makes a distinction between death in general and death in the sense of boundary situation by exemplifying the death of 'a loved one' and that of 'myself.'

2.1 Death of a loved one

The death of the most beloved persons with whom we used to talk is the deepest incision in phenomenal life. It leaves us with absolute loneliness, because the dying cannot be addressed any more; expression of communication is completely cut off. The loneliness at the point of death seems total for the dying as well as for the ones left behind. Nevertheless, the communication, which is existentially expressed by the loved ones, can remain alive as if it were an external reality.

Jaspers argues that any communication that has once been real will be able to forever eliminate the absolute loneliness. Death only destroys existence, which is a phenomenon. But Existenz is more than a phenomenon. Jaspers points out the radical difference between the absolute loneliness of being without communication and the loneliness caused by the death of someone we love. The first is a mute absence, in which one does not know oneself. Yet, it can be eliminated through existential communication. The second really makes me sad and unbearable. Yet, if I am existentially conscious of its presence, it can make me at home in transcendence. For this reason, the death of the loved one is not an end, since the object of true love remains existentially present even after death.

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32 Ibid., p. 194
2.2 My Death

Unlike the death of a loved one, my death is unique and not known in
general terms and therefore is regarded as the crucial boundary situation.
Death is an occurrence only in the case of other people. I cannot experience
my death; I can only have experiences related to it. As empirical existence I
can live in physical pain, in fear of death, in situations in which death seems
inevitable, and I can survive the danger. Some day I shall suffer death, but I
can never experience it. The possibility of death can strike me any time. We
generally experience death only when it occurs to another person, not to
ourselves.

For Jaspers, this experience of death does not yet express the
boundary situation. Our real challenge is not how to escape or avoid death
but rather how to live and test our life in view of death. Man should not be
afraid of death, that is, death must not be viewed as the total disaster of
objective annihilation. Rather, it should be considered as the sign of
Existenz.

Thus, Jaspers holds that man should have an existential approach to
death to avoid self-deceptions. That is to say, death should be viewed
neither as a mere total disaster of objective annihilation nor as a mere
transition between forms of existence. But it should be regarded as the
mirror of existenz.\textsuperscript{33} That is to say, one should view death with courage and
take it as an indefinite opportunity to be himself. Jaspers points out that man
fears death because it is cause of our will to exist, a hunger for life, pride
and ambition. A man who loses a sense of Existenz regards duration of
existence as the absolute measure of being, whereas man with a sense of

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid. p. 196
Existenz will be able to control the craving for life and find peace in facing death.

According to Jaspers, the fear of death can take place in two forms; the fear of existential non-being and the fear of vital nothing. The latter leads to clinging to life at all costs, whereas the former is to accept death as a part of life and to recognize the importance of each and every moment of life and thereby avoiding all postponements.

In the light of the twofold fear of death, Jaspers also regards death as having a twofold form; either as an ordinary existence or as a radical non-being. Death as ordinary existence belongs to man who merely lives his life without realizing his potentialities. For him, the threat of non-being will lead him to enjoy his life as much as possible; he may adopt the maxim like “let us eat and drink for tomorrow we may die.”

Or he may withdraw from all things and comfort himself in the world of fantasies, thinking that “I am going to exist in some other form, to continue what I have begun, my soul will transmigrate into other forms of existence, of which today’s is only one.”

The second sort of death i.e. the total non-being pertains to a man who realizes his potentialities, who no longer has the fear of death, for he knows that though life is death-oriented, it is unfinished or incomplete; only in death can man be said to be completed. Jaspers writes:

A life may have the character of completeness as a spectacle for other, but it never has that character in reality. Life remains a matter of tensions and goals,
inadequate and unfinished. If I live the most active life and aims to finish it, I am aiming at my death. In life, therefore, completeness is to us particular, a step, and a point of departure. What previously seemed like a goal becomes a means of life.\(^{36}\)

(3) **Suffering:** It is regarded as the boundary situation because it is definite and unavoidable. Suffering is a part of human existence. There are many types of suffering, physical pains, mental illness, diseases, destruction by other and death. Jaspers argues that even though we have succeeded to some extent in fighting against suffering with the utmost effort and means, our success is always limited. We dream of the day when biology and medicine would reach their peak, the world leaders bring total peace to the world, and the day when all pain, suffering, and illness would come to an end. In daily life we may try to avoid suffering in various ways such as closing our eyes to it, seeking medicine to cure the pain, or preventing other form speaking about our defects or faults.\(^{37}\) For Jaspers, this sort of reacting to suffering is unexistential or inauthentic because it may lead us to deceive ourselves by not accepting the factual reality of life.

One may ask: how to react to suffering? According to Jaspers, we may react to suffering in two ways; unexistential and existential. If I fight suffering as if it were avoidable and I regard human suffering only from a particular angle, but not as an integral part affecting the whole of existence, then my reaction becomes unexistential. So even if we try to evade suffering by keeping distance or withdrawing from a person whose

\(^{36}\) Ibid p. 200

\(^{37}\) Ibid. p. 202
misery or disease becomes incurable, our success is still limited. By reacting to suffering in this way man grows indifferent and inconsiderate to those who are unfortunate.

For this reason, Jaspers asserts that man should react to suffering in the existential manner, that is, he must dare to face suffering with courage and does not hide it from himself. Since it is impossible for man to have a complete happiness, everybody must bear and fulfill his burden. No one else can relieve him of it. Jaspers believes that suffering or pain exists for everyone even without any action of his own. It is a part of life that can awaken man to the possible Existenz. By adopting the existential attitude toward suffering man will not walk away from it, instead he will see it and will fight it to the best of his ability. Man with a sense of Existenz will not comfort himself in the harmonious tranquility of passive suffering or in a sheer darkness of ignorance. Hence, Jaspers states that it is suffering that help man find transcendence. “Man is made aware of himself by his suffering”.

(4) Struggle – It is a part of life, since no one can deny that all living beings including human existence are struggling for existence. It is considered as a boundary situation because man cannot exist without struggling in one form or another. Jaspers states that struggle is not just an interrelation of human beings, it goes on even in the individual himself. That is to say, man does not only struggle or fight with others but also with his own self. This is because human existence is not complete; it is always in the process of becoming. Man can question his own possibilities.

It may be noted that the struggle does not means only the struggle by force or violence but also means the struggle by love or nonviolence. Yet, 38

38 Ibid. p. 203
these two may be rebound into another. While other living beings may struggle just for survival, man’s struggle is more complicated, because he fights not only for material things but also for other things like position and fame. As Wallraff observes: “Conflict with others is inevitable, to live at all is to occupy useful space, to eat while many go hungry, and to hold position that others desire.”\textsuperscript{39}

According to Jaspers, struggle can be divided into two categories; the violent struggle for Existenz, and the loving struggle for Existenz.

(1) The violent struggle for Existenz: at this level there is always a conflict or struggle among men. It can be said that man has been struggling for existence from the very day he comes into existence no matter whether he is conscious of it or not. For Jaspers, one’s existence as such deprives others and vice versa. For example, while one occupies some position in the office, he excludes another, or my success may turn out to be somebody’s disappointment as it denies him the same opportunity. Moreover. One owns his success or failure to the struggle of his predecessors and at the same time is responsible for the same of his successors. As Jaspers observes:

My very life is due to the victorious struggle of my forebears, and my defeats will ultimately show up in the fact that in centuries to come no one will know me as his forebears.\textsuperscript{40}

\textsuperscript{40} Jaspers, Philosophy, Vol. II, p. 206
The above struggle may be regarded as the struggle for material goods. Apart from it, the violent struggle can be seen in the form of the conflict of ideas. It is not a fight for life and death as in the struggle for material existence but for rank and echo. It can bring both destructive and productive consequences. That is, it is destructive if it is being carried out as a means to material ends. One may criticize a colleague to find out what more he can say, to converse with him, or to completely discredit him. Struggle is also beneficial or productive if each critic places his own acquisitions at the disposal of his opponent.

Thus, one should have an open-minded attitude toward criticism of the others. Jaspers observes that the struggle of this sort is not just a matter of casting doubt by means of rank and measure. It is a deeper struggle, and at the same times a stirring and creative, therefore it may become a font of creativity as well as destruction. He further states that apart from struggling with others, one also struggles with one’s own self, particularly with one’s own temptations. As such, man who develops self-discipline will be strong-willed in contact to the others as well as to his own self. In short, one will be able to influence the others only when he can control himself.41

(2) The loving struggle for Existenz: in contrast to the violent struggle for Existenz, this kind of struggle comes out of good will, love and understanding. In this struggle, one expresses or manifests one’s love and care towards others without expecting anything in return. In violent struggle, some may win and some may lose. But in loving struggle nobody entirely wins or loses, if at all, both sides win or lose jointly.42 Those who

41 See Jaspers, Philosophy, Vol. II, p. 208
42 Ibid. p. 213
struggle to manifest love will not impose any condition or demand on their partners, because they know that everybody has freedom to accept or refuse. Once force is employed to gain superiority over the others, the loving struggle ceases to exist.

At this juncture, the question arises: How should we react to the struggle? A person with unexistential or ordinary attitude may say that struggle can be eradicated if man has a compassionate mind. For after all the world of mankind has to be sustained not by struggle or conflict but by compassion or mutual aid. Jaspers somehow agrees with this argument. Nevertheless, he contends that though human existence depends on mutual aid or help, in the last analysis the struggle still remains, because man is always in conflict with himself.

However, some may argue that we can regulate or put the struggle into order so that it can awaken man to the possible Existenz. Jaspers agrees with this argument, yet, he asks us to ponder upon the fact that all living being are struggling for existence, whereas man fights not only for existence but for more subtle things like dignity and freedom. Human struggle is therefore more complicate and difficult to put in a fixed form, because the individual has different likes or dislikes of his own.

Jaspers makes it clear that it is not possible for man to avoid the struggle, only he who loses a sense of Existenz will regard struggle as avoidable and unnecessary because such a man believes that human existence depends upon mutual help, understanding, agreement, acceptance and not the struggle. For Jaspers, we always live our lives at the expense of the other, whether we are aware of this situation or not is a different matter. One just lives in the world of illusion if one thinks one can live one’s life
without struggling with the others. The wrong approach to struggle may lead us either to reject it or glorify it.

One may reject the struggle on the ground that it only leads to destruction; it is better to surrender than to fight, whereas another may see the struggle as only way to survive. Jaspers, however, does not point out what is a definite solution; he just suggests that how we should react to the struggle depends on a particular situation. As Jaspers writes:

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\text{We must stop making definitive judgment about struggle; we can neither deny nor affirm it. Only one question remain, where to seize a power position and to profit by it, where to give in and to suffer, where to fight and to dare? And the decision does not come from general principles, though not without them, but from historic Existenz in its situation.}^{43}
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As we have seen above, struggle for Jaspers is a part and parcel of human existence without which man cannot be said to really exist. Man who lives inauthentic life may claim that life is possible even without struggle. But one who has existential attitude will accept that life is a struggle that no one can escape. Hence, if one wants to live an authentic life, he is a beneficiary of struggle and at some times its victim; one must extend help and gratefully accept it. That is to say, we should react to struggle in existential manner.

(5) Guilt: In general it is anxiety or unhappiness caused by the knowledge of having done wrong. For Jaspers, guilt may be caused either

\[^{43}\text{Ibid., p. 212}\]
by our action or intentional inaction. In ordinary existence man usually lives his life at the cost of the struggles and sufferings of the others. As such, he feels guilty of living by exploitation. Every act has consequences within the world that are unknown at the time of action. Since free action involves assumption of responsibility, the agent fears for consequences, for he knows they are contributed to him whether he knows them in advance or not. Some may think that by not entering into the world or not doing anything at all he will be able to avoid the guilt. But Jaspers argues, "Inaction itself is a kind of action."44 In other words, inaction is action by omission and it has consequences as well.

For Jaspers, a refusal to enter in the world is a refusal to meet the challenge of reality. "If I can do something and don't do it, I am guilty of the consequence of my inaction."45 Take for instance, when the riots were broken out of religious conflicts in which many people were killed, the authorities concerned did not do anything to stop them, though they were capable of doing so. In this context, they should feel guilty and must be held responsible for their inactions. Hence, one cannot avoid the guilt either by pointing the fingers at others or by deliberately doing nothing. Both action and inaction has a consequence of its own; whether I act or fail to act does not matter, because in any case I cannot help being guilty and thereby taking responsibility accordingly.

According to Jaspers, guilt is said to be a boundary situation because it is capable of bringing man back to his real conscience, which in turn guides him and in some sense finds him guilty though he may try his best to purify himself in the tension of temporal existence. Thus, any one who

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44 Ibid., p. 216
45 Ibid., p. 216
avoids taking responsibility for his action or omission will be regarded as the irresponsible person, who succumbs to 'bad faith', to use Sartre's terminology. Such a person may evade the guilt by saying, "that is the way it is, and I can't change it", or by interpreting any guilt as specific and then avoidable. For those who are true to themselves, these untrue concealments of the guilt are impossible. As Jaspers observes:

I am myself, but guilt-laden. Now the only way I can live is the tension of seeking to life myself up, it is not a matter of guiltlessness any more, but of really avoiding whatever I can avoid, so as to come to the profound, intrinsic, unavoidable guilt, without coming to rest there either.  

The above-mentioned statements show that guilt is inevitable and unavoidable for human existence, yet it can lead us to live an authentic life. Though the boundary situations reveal the finitude of Existenz by showing its limitations, they at the same time reveal its possibilities too. Man as Existenz overcomes the agony created by the situations through an act of transcending. This takes Existenz to the realm of freedom and Transcendence, which reveal the infinite possibilities of man.

Freedom and Transcendence

As mentioned earlier, Jaspers holds that man can be viewed in two perspectives; either as object of study or as freedom. Now, many questions come up with regard to freedom: Does freedom imply that one is free to do

\[46\] Ibid., p. 217
what he wants to do? Is the idea of freedom possible? And if it is possible, how can it be investigated? Is the human agent pre-determined or not? Can the idea of freedom go without any link with Transcendence? Before looking into these questions, it is necessary to highlight some theories that deal with the concept of freedom in order to understand what kind of freedom that Jaspers wants to emphasize when he talks about ‘freedom’, and how it is linked with Transcendence.

First of all, Jaspers points out that there is some kind of freedom that can be open to empirical investigations as we find in the case of civil and political liberty. And this kind of freedom he calls ‘sociological freedom’, since it can be observed whether it is prevailing in society or not. Sociological freedom is easily observed in connection with the relations of power obtaining among men within society and the state. Take for example, the state can give right and liberty to its citizen in order to vote or to be elected. Moreover, we find that in many countries people have challenged the authorities and sometimes even sacrificed their lives for this kind of freedom. Thus, freedom of this sort is more popular among the people since it can bring out something objective and concrete, not just abstract idea.

For Jaspers, sociological forms of freedom can be characterized in terms of the social, political and economic activities in the state. Yet, he makes it clear that these do not touch the question of free will, because they only depict the social situation and view freedom as if it were the object of study. However, Jaspers points out that this kind of freedom is not totally irrelevant as it can create or provide the opportunities to the individual for

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47 See Charles F. Wallraff, Karl Jaspers: An introduction to his philosophy, Ibid., p. 104
expressing his or her views with a sense of freewill in our social life. It is therefore indispensable for realizing existential freedom.

At this point, it is relevant to point out the distinction between the will and freewill. The will is that which wills something else and may be comprehended empirically and thus be regarded as "the top of rung in a scale of reactions." Its existence presupposes the reflex movements of organism and motion of impulsive striving. It may occur in mechanically determined fashion, in response to specific stimuli, the mechanism and thus is accompanied by a sense of striving of insistence upon realization and fulfillment. This impulsive striving, however, is still blind; it is ignorant of its goal. In this context, human action is devoid of volition.

Free will or volition, on the other hand, is that which wills itself and is the active assurance of being which is the ground of freedom and enables us to confront and examine all objects of deliberation. Jaspers writes:

True consciousness in the sense of knowing and I pursue belongs to free will alone. My free will is no mere sense of reality or striving insistence nor is it the pragmatically indifferent visualization of an objective content. It is the union of both, rather the lucidity of the goal at which my striving aims.

However, Jaspers emphasizes that freewill or volition presupposes the reflex movements of the organism and the motion of impulsive striving,

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49 Jaspers, Karl., Philosophy Vol. II, p. 133
50 Ibid, p. 134
because "volition alone does not exist until there is discriminating thought." 

Based on the difference between the will and the free will, Jaspers further differentiates between vital energies and volitional ones. Vital energies express themselves in form of motivating forces, which may lead us to a confusing line between illusion and reality. They are regarded as the basic instincts of human existence. The strongest wins, the victory constitutes the choice. For Jaspers, it is not possible to speak of free will until there is a clear "I choose." In this connection, he points out the difference between vital and volitional energy.

For Jaspers, vital energy is the will to survive, it is merely registering thought, whereas the volitional energy transcends the level of mere impulsive striving existence, it is activating thought, which plays active role in helping us to reach an authentic choice. So volitional energy is man’s potentiality, which enables him to transcend his empirical existence to reach the level of Existenz. It can be realized in self-elucidating manner, by which the line between authentic and inauthentic choice is drawn. It is not tied to a fixed standpoint but is mobile and open to thoughtful hearing and guidance.

In this connection, Jaspers mentions another theory of freedom, which is called 'psychological freedom.' According to this view, freedom can be seen only when our action is devoid of disturbance from outside. Man can act or choose freely insofar as his motives can be undisturbedly translated into reality and when he can make a considered decision about his will, or make undisturbed selection from the possibilities he is aware of.

Jaspers argues that the so-called psychological freedom is not really freedom. It can be objectified, but "does not answer the question of free

51 Ibid, p. 134
He maintains that sociological freedom and psychological freedom represent only objective modes of freedom, and therefore are not freedom proper, that is, existential freedom. Jaspers puts it:

I must want this if I know I am original free, for they are conditions of the appearance of freedom in Existenz if I want realization in the world, not merely possibility and internality.\textsuperscript{53}

The sociological as well as psychological kinds of freedom, however, are not irrelevant as they are conditions of the appearance of existential freedom. Now let us consider what Jaspers means by existential freedom.

It may be mentioned, first of all, that existential freedom represents the non-empirical, inner creative act of mind, which defies objective forms of freedom; it is directly concerned with the will of the individual. As Jaspers puts it, “Freedom exists as volition”.\textsuperscript{54} He points out that volition or free will is not just the forward driving force. In other words, the will that wills itself is the innate potentiality that makes man a conscious being. It is different from the will that wills something which is associated with deliberation or reflection. That is to say, the freedom is original possibility of man, which is not subject to scientific inquiry as in the case of sociological or psychological freedom as mentioned above.

The reason why freedom is not subject to scientific iniquity is that to do so would lead to a denial of freedom. Jaspers says, “The question of

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., p. 146
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., p. 147
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., p. 133
freedom originate in me. I will its existence." He strongly believes that man as Existenz has possibility of being free. In short, man is freedom. He argues that the fact that we can ask about freedom signifies that man is potentially free. Jaspers writes:

Without this possibility of being free myself, I cannot ask about it. But what makes me ask is an original will to be free, so that my freedom is anticipated in the fact of asking."

Jaspers, nevertheless, explains that consciousness of freedom is not a matter of inference but of experience. Freedom cannot be proved or disproved by cognitive insight but by actions. Freedom cannot be demonstrated but is to be expressed through Existenz. At this point, it is relevant to note that Jaspers is not interested in the controversies of determinism and indeterminism as he emphasizes that existential freedom is to be distinguished from them. The determinists believe that the freewill is not possible. The acts of mind like deliberations, feeling etc., are viewed as the outcome of some empirical conditions, which can be explained in terms of natural laws. Accordingly, freedom in the form of personal choice is not acceptable to the determinists. Jaspers argues that if everything including mental events were pre-determined, there would be no freedom at all, and that if this were the case, then one may not take responsibility for what he does since one is not free. This view may lead to fatalism.

The indeterminists, on the other hand, argue that freedom is not determined by environmental or personal factors, because it is an inherent

\[\text{55} \text{ Ibid. p. 154} \]
\[\text{56} \text{ Ibid. p. 155.} \]
autonomous will. This implies that actions are totally undetermined. For Jaspers, this view leads to the impression that situations do not play any role in human actions. This view also is not acceptable to Jaspers. For this reason, both determinism and indeterminism lead to deny free will as they “put matters in a wrong plane.”

Jaspers clearly states that freedom proper cannot be described in terms of either determinism or indeterminism, because it is not without any control, nor is it capricious. Rather, it presupposes some factors such as knowledge, arbitrariness and law.

Knowledge: through knowledge we are aware of our several possibilities out of which the choice is made. But freedom is not synonymous with knowledge, for even after knowing the possible alternatives, one may not act freely.

Arbitrariness: it is presupposed by freedom, because freedom involves spontaneity and is not acting in accordance with a fixed plan. Arbitrariness implies acting as one wishes and this may involves making random choice. But freedom is not identical with arbitrariness, because it implies commitment and responsibility for our spontaneous articulated individual decisions.

Law: freedom presupposes law because one’s decision can be taken in accordance with a law, which one deems essential and thus adopts as binding. But freedom is not identical with law, because even being aware of such law, one can resist it or ignore it completely.

57 Ibid., p. 150
Jaspers believes that man should strive to act in accordance with his own norm, which is considered appropriate for the given situation. But the given law may turn out to be out of date in the future. There cannot be a priori norm by which the validity of one’s chosen norm or law could be measured? The validity of one’s choice is dependent on the individual perspective and circumstances in which he lives. Thus, it may be said that what Jaspers wants to emphasize while dealing with existential freedom is that man is capable of acting voluntarily on the basis of self-articulated principles. Existential choice is not a whimsical choice. For Jaspers, reason plays a very important role in making existential choice. Like Kant, he believes that reason and freedom are inseparable.

Kant sets forth the problem of freedom in distinct and forthright manner and this can be cited as a typical example of rational objective analysis of freedom. For him, freedom and choice are not violations of universal moral law, but rather they are expressions of it. For moral law is based on a conscious and rational choice of the individual. Therefore freedom consists in a rational and deliberate conformity to the moral law, which is not external but comes from within, when man legislates for himself, he also legislates for all mankind.

Kant does not talk about any unique or individual moral situation; he tries to discover universal moral principles. The moral law is at the same time both individual and universal.\textsuperscript{58} For, in order that an action be morally good, it is not enough that it conforms to the moral law, but it also must be done for the sake of the law. He says, “... A free will and a will subject to

moral laws are one and the same.” A will is free only in so far it is autonomous. Freedom of will consists in the ability of the rational beings to act according to the fundamental maxims. The self-imposed principles of conduct also become universal laws; Kant holds that only those actions are justified which can be universalized. As he says, “Act only on that maxim whereby thou canst at the same time will that it should become a universal law.” A rational being must follow the universal principles that are valid for all rational beings.

The point of similarities between Jaspers and Kant is that both regard the free will as the source of value. Both lay stress on intention of a choice rather than on consequences. However, there are dissimilarities as well. While Kant regards moral law and freedom to be identical, Jaspers holds that freedom is not synonymous with law. Kant makes an attempt to discover universal moral principles; he is not interested in unique situation. In contrast, for Jaspers, freedom is not in conformity to the universally valid norm. He is rather concerned with the complexities of moral situation born out of a temporal and historical being. Though Kant regards the individual as a creator of norms, he allows the individual to be submerged in what is universal and objective. This is because he thinks that all moral norms have their origin completely in man. Jaspers, on the other hand, emphasizes the uniqueness of the individual and the situation.

At this point, Jaspers comes close to Sartre. For him, freedom is a constant possibility to negate; this is, to deny any external compulsion. Thus, freedom according to Sartre is essentially related to the successful

59 Ibid., p. 79
60 Ibid., p. 80
61 Ibid., p. 46
execution of one's plans. Sometimes it is difficult to control the external situations, but what can be controlled is the attitude towards these situations. Man is free because he appears as a lack; he is always on the move to fulfill and actualize himself.

It may be concluded that Jaspers existential freedom does not result from a struggle of motives. It is not a decision in which man merely seems to decide after performing a calculation. Nor is it obedient to an objectively phrased imperative, for such obedience only expresses a preliminary form or a decline of freedom. The crux of freedom is that I choose. And by choice it means one has to choose in situation, and not in the absence of outward restraints. Jaspers writes:

What the word choice express is that in my free decision I am not only conscious of acting in the world but of creating my own being in historic continuity, I know that I not only exist, that I not only am the way I am and therefore act in that way, but that as I act and decide I originate both my actions and the way I am.\textsuperscript{62}

From these statements it follows that when man decides or chooses there is no separation between the choice and he who chooses because he is this free choice. "Freedom is the choice of my own self, I am by choosing, rather; if I am not, I choose not."\textsuperscript{63} This implies that to be man (Existenz) is be free.

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., p. 160
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid., p. 160
It must be noted here that Jaspers does not only talk about freedom 'from what' but also about 'freedom for what', which according to him seems all the more important, because unless man knows what he wants he would be helpless in the face of endless possibilities.

Moreover, Jaspers points out that freedom is not absolute because it is always bound to situations. That is to say, freedom is to be actualized in the situation. He says, "Nothing but man in temporal existence can be free." Now the question arises how is freedom related to Transcendence? But before answering this question, it is necessary to understand what does Jaspers means by Transcendence?

Transcendence, as has been briefly discussed earlier, is one of the modes of Being. Jaspers identifies it with God. But it is not God in the sense of any personality. It is not a father in Heaven who reveals himself in the world but can be realised through man. In fact the idea of God comes from two different sources the Christian Bible and the Greek philosophy. The former is living God and accessible through faith and obedience whereas the latter is originated in thought and is conceived as cosmic law. Jaspers believes that there can be freedom only if there is Transcendence. For him, God or Transcendence cannot be described or defined as this or that being. God as Transcendence is beyond the world. He writes:

\[ \text{God is not something that stands in finite from before the eyes or the mind. As the absolute imperative, God} \]
\[ \text{confronts me as the command of my authentic self to my empirical existence. If my will is grounded in the} \]

\[ \text{Ibid., p. 155} \]
\[ \text{Ibid., p. 173.} \]
absolute, I apprehended it as that which I myself authentically am, and to which my empirical existence should respond.\textsuperscript{68}

At this point, it is worthwhile to highlight the arguments for the existence of God. Generally speaking, there are at least four doctrines, which concern with the problem of God's existence; the atheistic, the positivist, the agnostic and the theist. The atheist does not believe in the existence of God and conclude that there is no God. The positivist argues that whether God exists or not does not deserve much explanation, because to debate such a question is completely meaningless. The agonistic holds that the existence of God is beyond our knowledge, nothing can be known about it. We cannot confirm nor deny God's existence. Finally, the theists believe that there is God, for we can prove His existence indirectly, if not directly. Here we shall focus our attention to the theistic arguments for Gods existence and see how Jaspers reacts to them.

The ontological argument asserts that God exists since He is that than which nothing greater can be conceived.\textsuperscript{69} According to Jaspers such assertion is based on pure thought of a necessary Supreme Being. It can go on endlessly and yet fails to affirm the existence of God. Moreover, Jaspers argues that such argument would involve contradiction because if the initial greatest conceivable Being were not considered as the final and ultimate Being, then any attempt to conceive another greatest conceivable Being assumed to be real and greater than the initial one contradicts the initial claim that the greatest conceivable Being had been conceived. Jaspers

\textsuperscript{68} Ibid., p. 37.
\textsuperscript{69} St. Anselm, Quoted in God and Reason edited by L. Miller, (New York: The Macmillian Co., 1972) p. 25.
maintains that a proof for God's existence based on pure thought would imply tautologies and would assert nothing about the reality of God. He writes:

The greatest conceivable being is a possible thought. If it is possible, the greatest conceivable being must be real also, for if it were not, I could conceive a being greater than the greatest conceivable one, namely, the one that is real also, which would be a contradiction.70

The above statements show that Jaspers does not accept the ontological argument for it attempts to demonstrate the existence of God through a pure thought.

Other arguments for God's existence are cosmological and teleological. The former believes in the existence of God because his existence can be proved from the fact that the existence of the universe or cosmos presupposes the Ultimate Cause of all things. The Ultimate Cause of the universe is believed to be God. The latter asserts the existence of God by taking the evidence from the fact that since the universe or cosmos is in order just as the watch and the watch maker, so there must be someone who creates or designs this universe and that one is God.

For Jaspers, these proofs are inapplicable since what we can do at most is only to infer the existence of things in the world from the existence of other things. The world as a whole is not an object because we are always in it, and we never confront the world as a whole, since the world is not finished; it is in continuous change. Both arguments have one thing in

70 Karl Jaspers, Philosophy Vo. III, p. 177.
common: they start from something that can be found and experienced in the world to arrive at the conclusion that if this is, then God must exist.\textsuperscript{71}

Finally, let us look at the argument from moral point of view, which is proposed by Kant. According to Kant, the source of moral consciousness can be nothing other than a Supreme Being or intelligence. This implies that moral consciousness is an evidence for the existence of God. But he does not consider his position as another theistic proof because it does not prove or confirm existence of God as a theoretically reliable inference. Instead, he considers the Supreme Being as an implication of moral obligation. Jaspers criticizes the moral argument on the ground that like other proofs, it cannot assure us that there is God as it moves from the presence of moral consciousness to the conclusion that there is God as the source of moral consciousness in man.

It can be said that Jaspers does not comply with the theories that God can be proved, for a proved God would be no God, but merely a thing in the world.\textsuperscript{72} For Jaspers, to advance proofs for God’s existence is to identify God with the objective beings in the world. Thus, all proofs for the existence of God are considered as the ways of gaining a certainty through thoughts, which are totally devoid of religious experience or a direct awareness of the presence of the Transcendence.

Rejecting both the theistic proofs and atheistic positions on the issue of God’s existence, Jaspers takes a balancing position by introducing philosophical faith. What is philosophical faith? Is it different from a revealed faith? According to Jaspers, it is a faith that arises on the basis of

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid. p. 35
\textsuperscript{72} Karl Jaspers, Way to Wisdom, p. 42
the attitude of transcending the world of objects in the quest for the impenetrable transcendent realm of Divine reality. It is different from a religious or revealed faith in the sense that the latter could be described as belief in religious dogma about God whereas the former is said to be a conscious belief in God and is based on reason and freedom of the individual.

Moreover, philosophical faith is beyond subjectivity and objectivity in the sense that this faith is not grounded in mere thought about God but involves authentic awareness of God through the act of transcending. It is not directed towards any objective being or anything knowable such as church-creed or palpable object of the world, it is not based on science but philosophizing. Jaspers writes:

I would like once again to emphasize that eternal independent origin of all philosophizing, the philosophical faith which communicate itself in the thinking of reason. This faith is neither confessional theology nor science, neither a church-creed nor unbelief.73

The above statements clearly show that Jaspers rejects the authority of institutionalized religion in its claim to have a monopoly of the experience of God. Almost all religions institutions, Jaspers argues, are characterized by rituals, sacred writings, cult, dogmas, which many times lead even to fanaticism. They present transcendence in specific objective forms, for him to believe in God does not require a proof or permission from

any religious authority since the belief depends on freedom of the individual.

Thus, it can be said that philosophical faith is that which expresses a firm belief in the truth, which cannot be proved in the same way as one proves a scientific theorem regarding finite things. In other words, philosophical faith is not universally valid.\textsuperscript{74} Philosophical faith can also be seen as an attempt by Jaspers to conciliate between the polarity of rational and irrational. However Jaspers emphasizes that philosophical faith may not be enough, it has to go hand in hand with knowledge.

However, it should be noted that Transcendence is different from the act of transcending. For, the latter involves the process of realization of God, whereas the former is the terminus. For Jaspers the Being of Transcendence as God is the Encompassing of all encompassing. That is to say, it is the absolute Encompassing, which we can become aware of as a terminus of transcending-thinking. But a mere thought about Transcendence is not enough until it leads one to the personal awareness of it.

As we have seen, God or Transcendence according to Jaspers cannot be proved or disproved. He is to be realized through philosophical faith. So God cannot be approached through cognition but through symbols or ciphers. Jaspers argues that in the process of interpreting the world and communicating it to others, one realizes that the world points beyond itself in a non-cognitive symbolic manner which can solely be decoded by Existenz to mean the presence of Transcendent reality or God. Now the question is: what does Jaspers mean by the term cipher?

\textsuperscript{74} See Jaspers, The perennial Scope of Philosophy, p. 10
According to Jaspers, cipher is unique; it is not a concrete object that could be tested. It cannot be regarded as a sign or the empirical symbolism of the science. In fact, signs are cognitive realities and could be verified or tested for appropriateness, but this is not applicable to the cipher of Transcendence. Jaspers puts it: "We call the metaphysical objectivity a cipher because it is the language of Transcendence, not Transcendence itself".\textsuperscript{75}

It can be said that what Jaspers calls 'signs' can also be explained as what is generally known as an indication. For example, on seeing cloud one can say with certainly that it will rain. In this sense, a cognitive significance has a role to play in giving a prior knowledge of what is to come about.

However, cipher is not sign, like above-mentioned; rather, it is the non-cognitive symbol through which Existenz becomes aware of Transcendence. This awareness is possible only if a particular situation or object of thought is seen in the transcending movement of thought to point beyond itself. So, only the symbol which I recognize or which permits me to note that the object points beyond itself can be regarded as cipher. This implies that the notion of cipher would make sense only for individual who believes that the world is not everything.

It is, however, interesting to note that the use of the word 'cipher' is derived from the fact that messages are sometimes put into codes, which have to be deciphered. Jaspers holds that ordinary finite events can point beyond themselves in a symbolic manner, but the message must be decoded and the key to the code is not a form of knowledge. What is required is a

\textsuperscript{75} Karl Jaspers, Philosophy Vol. III, p. 113.
free decision of the man in responding to the message, which comes from Transcendence. In principle, anything can become a cipher so long as it points to some other finite entity or event but to Being itself. To identify Transcendence or God with anything finite or with the totality of the world is to remain trapped in immanence and thus to deny freedom.

Hence, the cipher is conceived as the symbol, which the individual apprehends and accepts perhaps figuratively as the voice of Transcendence. The cipher itself is not the Transcendent. It can be apprehended only in the sense of being aware of an unintelligible Encompassing reality, even though what we refer to, as cipher cannot be described as this or that. It is therefore clear that since the presence of the Transcendence or God is revealed to man indirectly, the acceptance of the reality of such Transcendent Being must be a matter of faith.

Moreover, Jaspers points out that though cipher cannot be verified, it can be read in many ways. In doing so, he explains that this can occur in three different levels of language, (1) the immediate incommunicable language of Transcendence (2) the mediated universal in the form of myth and revelation and (3) the metaphysically speculative language.\textsuperscript{76}

The first level cannot be verified and any attempt to do so would falsify the original awareness. The second can be communicated and transmitted from one person to another as an account of description of event. It is no longer the original transcendent language as it is transmitted to the others.

\textsuperscript{76} Jaspers, Karl., Philosophy Vol. III, pp. 113-117
Finally, the third level is not objectifiable at all, because it deals with the awareness of authentic reality, which is solely meant for Existenz and not for consciousness at large. This level involves speculation, which is the way of conceiving transcendence through the process of reasoning. It is a contemplative self-immersion to the point of contact with transcendence. In other words, speculation does not lead to a direct knowledge of Transcendence itself. Instead, it can only lead us to the recognition for the cipher of Transcendence.

Jaspers admits that it is difficult to understand the cipher as it can be read in different ways, which in turn merely lead us to an endless interpretation of ciphers by other ciphers. Moreover, each reading is not final; it can unveil another cipher, which also points to the infinite presence of Transcendence. He writes:

I can therefore neither conceive this absolute being nor give up trying to conceive it. This being is transcendence, because I cannot grasp it but must transcend to it in thoughts that are completed when you cannot think them... Transcendence is beyond all form.77

On the surface, it seems that freedom and Transcendence are opposed to each other, because if freedom is to be bestowed by God, then my will is not any own. For that matter, I will not take responsibility for what I have done. However, Jaspers holds that even though the individual realizes all his possibilities in confrontation with

77 Ibid, pp. 34-35.
God, yet he is responsible for his own actions, for God gives him freedom to act or choose on his own.

As mentioned earlier, God or Transcendence cannot be experienced by senses but can only be believed in. From where does come this faith? According to Jaspers, true faith does not come from the world outside or from a revelation but from the freedom of man. He argues that freedom and Transcendence are inseparable. \(^7^8\) Freedom manifests the possibility of the Transcendence; it is only by being free that I experience Transcendence. \(^7^9\) The true belief in God therefore does not come out of force or authority but from a sense of freedom. Jaspers writes:

> God exists for me in the degree to which I in freedom authentically become myself. He does not exist as a scientific content but only as openness to existence. To illuminate existence as freedom does not prove the existence of God, but it points to the area in which certainty of his existence is possible. \(^8^0\)

From the above statements it follows that there can be no freedom without God. For Jaspers, freedom without God, if any, becomes illusory and unexistential. That is to say, if freedom is regarded to be

\(^{7^8}\) Jaspers, Way to Wisdom, p. 45.
\(^{7^9}\) Philosophy vol. II, p. 173.
\(^{8^0}\) Way to Wisdom, p. 46.
absolute and independent of Transcendence, it will be perplex and empty.

To choose freedom and independence from every structure of the world, or to decide against any authority does not mean to decide against Transcendence. Freedom and Transcendence are supportive to each other. Nevertheless, they are not identical; while freedom is a possibility of Existentz, that is, in order to realize freedom we must take decisions, but decisions alone are not sufficient, Transcendence makes it possible for us to be free, it is the ground for freedom. Thus, freedom is a gift bestowed on us by Transcendence.