

Contents

<i>La Ilaha Illa Allah</i>, the Pillar of All Religions: <i>Tawhid</i> and the Truth of the Human Being	2
<i>La Ilaha Illa Allah</i> as the Fundamental Pillar of Religion	3
The Relationship Between <i>La Ilaha Illa Allah</i> and Understanding the Truth of the Human Being	3
Innate Nature (<i>Fitrah</i>) and Human Testimony to the Principle of <i>Tawhid</i>	4
The Hierarchy of Beings and the Distinction Between Humans and Non-Humans	5
Conclusion	6

Pillar of Islam: Relation of the Truth of the Human Being to Monotheism (*Tawhid*)

La Ilaha Illa Allah, the Pillar of All Religions: *Tawhid* and the Truth of the Human Being

To understand any structure—living or inanimate—we must not start by looking at its walls or windows, but by examining the foundational pillar that bears the weight of the entire building. If we fail to understand that central pillar, our grasp of the whole design will be fundamentally flawed. The exact same rule applies to religion and humanity. We might discuss religious rituals, practices, or even moral traits, but until we reach the core foundation sustaining this entire system, our picture of faith and humanity's place within it remains incomplete. This brings us to the ultimate question: What is the most fundamental foundation of religion, the one that ultimately defines the truth of the human being?

The answer lies in the same unique principle known as the most foundational pillar of faith: *La Ilaha Illa Allah* (There is no deity but Allah). This is not just a linguistic statement or a ritualistic slogan. Rather, it is the ultimate criterion for understanding religion, the yardstick for interpreting the truth of the human being, and the basis for determining how the two are connected. If all of religion rests on this single phrase, it is not just one component among many; it is the universal rule that gives meaning and validity to everything else. Therefore, any discussion about humanity, religion, or the relationship between them must inevitably start right here.

La Ilaha Illa Allah as the Fundamental Pillar of Religion

We can only properly understand religion when we start our inquiry from its core foundation, rather than its secondary branches. When we say religion is based on a single phrase, it means the reality of faith is not scattered across a multitude of parts. Instead, it is concentrated within a profound unity from which all other levels derive their meaning. In this framework, *La Ilaha Illa Allah* is the absolute pillar of religion—the principle without which religion loses its very foundation.

The importance of this principle goes far beyond its theological status. In daily prayers (*Salah*) and the call to prayer (*Adhan*), we bear witness to this unity time and time again. This repeated testimony shows that religion constantly returns the human being to their fundamental core, ensuring that their connection with the principle of monotheism is preserved at the level of awareness, speech, and existential direction. This principle is not just a concept to be mentally validated; it is the organizing axis of all religious life.

The reality of religion does not begin with dispersion and duality; it finds its meaning in the oneness of its source. For this reason, if someone wants to know true religion, the upright faith (*Hanif*), and pure Islam, they must first grasp the profound meaning of this principle. The knowledge of religion begins exactly where its foundational unity is recognized.

The Relationship Between *La Ilaha Illa Allah* and Understanding the Truth of the Human Being

We cannot understand our existential truth simply by comparing ourselves biologically or naturally to other beings. To know a human being, one must possess a criterion that reveals their fundamental distinction. This standard is the very same principle introduced as the pillar of

religion. From this perspective, the truth of the human being is also recognized through *La Ilaha Illa Allah*.

This carries a crucial implication: We are not defined merely by our outward appearance, our conventional rational abilities, or our biological membership in the human race. Our existential reality is measured by the relationship we establish with the principle of *tawhid*. As a result, the definition of humanity in this intellectual framework is existential, not just natural or sociological. What determines our true level of humanity is the degree to which this principle is present and actualized within our being.

From this point, the relationship between the human and religion goes far beyond a superficial connection. Religion is not something added to us or imposed from the outside; rather, it is the criterion for discovering our own truth. If a person is measured without this principle, their definition remains incomplete. Likewise, if religion is interpreted apart from this principle, its true essence is lost. The unity that forms the foundation of religion is simultaneously the standard for understanding humanity itself.

Innate Nature (*Fitrah*) and Human Testimony to the Principle of *Tawhid*

The verbal testimony given during prayer and the *Adhan*, alongside our innate (*Fitri*) testimony, are two levels of a single reality. The first level is outward expression and conscious awareness; the second is deeply rooted in our *fitrah*. Because of this, truly knowing ourselves is impossible without acknowledging this inner witness. If *fitrah* testifies to the unity of *Ilah* (deity/beloved), then at the deepest level of our existence, we share a profound connection to this unity. This is no accident—it is the ultimate indicator of monotheism's role in defining our truth.

Ultimately, our bond with the pillar of religion is not just a contractual or educational link. It can only be understood from deep within our existential structure. By virtue of simply being human, we inherently hold a relationship with this principle, and it is this very relationship that makes a correct understanding of both religion and ourselves possible.

It is not enough to simply know this principle intellectually or utter it verbally; we must look at how much *La Ilaha Illa Allah* has been activated within our existential core. This shows that the truth of the human being is measured by the inner actualization of this principle, not by superficial claims.

Here, we recognize that human existence has various ranks and dimensions, which do not all sit on the same level. There is a realm within us that transcends conventional intellect or purely material layers. When this higher dimension is activated, a person draws closer to their genuine human truth. Therefore, being human in the absolute sense comes from actualizing that elevated rank, which is measured entirely by the principle of *tawhid*.

This analysis makes a clear distinction: There is a difference between being biologically human and being “truly” human. An individual might look human on the outside, but the ultimate criterion for being human is the actualization of their immaterial, supra-rational dimension—a realm directly tied to the principle of monotheism. Consequently, the human truth is not a static, guaranteed state; it depends entirely on how this principle is realized in each person.

The Hierarchy of Beings and the Distinction Between Humans and Non-Humans

If a person’s supra-rational or immaterial dimension is active, they are truly human. If this dimension remains dormant, that individual might be likened to an angel, an animal, a plant, an inanimate object, or something even lower. This categorization shows that in Shia conceptual

frameworks, being human is not a superficial title. It is an existential rank achieved by actualizing *tawhid* within oneself.

The vital point is that our distinction from other beings is not based on physical structure or traits. The real dividing line is how the immaterial dimension of our existence is actualized. This fact elevates our status, but it also makes our responsibility much heavier. We are elevated because our truth is tied to a level far beyond the material world, and our responsibility is heavy because falling from this elevated rank is entirely possible.

In terms of existential rank, a person can relate to other beings. Therefore, the boundary between these ranks is not physical appearance, but the quality of actualizing that foundational principle. Consequently, measuring the truth of the human being is only possible by referring back to the very same pillar upon which religion itself is built.

Conclusion

Our understanding of both humanity and religion only becomes cohesive and precise when both are interpreted from a single, unified origin. If religion stands upon its most fundamental pillar, knowing it must also begin from that very pillar, not from scattered parts and secondary manifestations. This pillar is the principle of *tawhid*—the core upon which all of religion is built, dictating the meaning and direction of everything else. Any interpretation of religion that drifts from this foundation has strayed from its center of gravity.

Within this framework, the truth of the human being is not recognized merely by physical appearance or conventional physical and rational traits. In this view, we are beings whose truth depends on the degree to which the principle of monotheism is actualized within our existence. More precisely, what places us in the true rank of humanity is the activation of the supra-rational

or immaterial part of our existence. This dimension is where the truth that distinguishes us from all other beings finally emerges.

The significance of this analysis is that it does not just establish an external or contractual link between religion and humanity; it reveals a profound internal unity between the two. The exact same principle that forms the foundation of faith is the criterion for evaluating the truth of the human being. As a result, religion is not just a set of behavioral instructions; it illuminates the horizon of our self-understanding. We are not merely the audience of religion; our truth is defined in direct relation to religion's foundation.

From this perspective, our verbal testimony to the unity of *Illah* in prayers and the testimony of our *fitrah* to this same truth are two manifestations of a single truth—a truth presents both in the structure of religion and in the depths of our existence. Because of this, the search for true religion and the search for true humanity are not distinct paths—they merge into a single, shared truth.

Ultimately, if we want to correctly understand the relationship between the human being and the pillar of religion, we must realize this is not a relationship between a being and an external rule. Rather, it is the relationship between our truth and the most fundamental rule that gives meaning to our very humanity. In this intellectual system, the more this principle is activated within a person, the more apparent their human truth is revealed. Conversely, the more this dimension remains neglected, the further they drift from the authentic rank of humanity. Therefore, *tawhid* is not merely the foundation of religion; it is the ultimate criterion for knowing ourselves.