

Title: What Is the Truth of Human Essence? Who Is the Human Being?

H1 What Is the True Meaning of the Word 'Human'?

What is a human being? What a strange question! You may say all tens of billions of people who have lived on Earth so far, and all those who are scattered around different parts of the world now are humans.

Actually, the answer to this question depends on **how we define the human being**. If we mean a "creature that is upright with broad flat nails," then yes, they are all humans. But If we change our definition of the **human being**, then certainly this number will be narrowed down.

Throughout history, many people have answered the question, "What kind of creature is a human being?" Each answer has had its own proponents and opponents, but the extent to which these answers align with the **truth of human essence** requires examination. You may ask, "Which truth? Who determines the **truth of human essence**? Based on what criteria can we decide which answer is right or wrong?" These are the topics that we will address in this article.

H2 The Debate over Human Essence

Let us imagine that we are encountering a phenomenon called the "human being" for the first time, and we know nothing about it. We step out of our own bodies and look at ourselves and the world around us from the perspective of an external observer. From this point of view, the world becomes a collection of various phenomena, one of which is the human.

If you face a phenomenon for the first time and do not even know its name or what it does, what will you do? For example, let us go back to the 1980s when the first generation of bulky mobile phones was made and introduced. If you had been there for the first time and seen this device, what would you have guessed about its what-ness? Different options would have probably come to your mind, but ultimately, how would you have been sure that you had the correct knowledge about this device? When you face the phenomena that you have no knowledge about, the most reasonable and logical thing to do is to consult its **manufacturer** or an **expert**, and that is what we often do. Of course, let us forget about the few people who do not care where or from whom they get their information.

The human being is also a phenomenon, and like any other phenomenon, he has his own specific experts. Who are the **experts in humanology**? Psychologists? Sociologists? Archaeologists? Biologists? Philosophers? Politicians? Religious scholars? Which of these groups can provide us with a complete definition of the human essence? From whom should we get the answers to our questions?

Look at the following statements:

- A man is a wolf to another man.
- Man is descended from apes.
- Man is a rational animal.
- Man is a talking animal.
- Man is a tool-making animal.
- Man is the symbol-making animal.
- Man is a moral and conscious being.
- Man is an upright animal with broad flat nails.
- Man is a mammal with two legs and a large brain.

- Man is a being that creates cultures and civilizations.

The above definitions are the result of thinking by a group of intellectuals in different periods of time, from philosophers and sociologists to biologists. Sometimes, even intellectuals in the same field do not agree on the **truth of human essence**. For example, each philosopher in his own era has offered a specific definition of the human being. At times, several philosophers have debated with each other and written books criticizing each other's theories, but they still have not reached a conclusive answer.

It is interesting to note that this process is still going on. For instance, the postmodern school of thought, which is the dominant way of thinking in the present era, has offered new definitions of the **truth of human essence**. It even believes that modern and traditional humans have different natures and definitions! We discussed this topic in “Wrong Definitions of the Human Being?”

The fundamental question here is: How can a single truth, called the human being, have such different and sometimes contradictory definitions? These various definitions of the human essence remind us of a famous story by Rumi called “The Elephant in the Dark.”

In this story, we see people facing a creature called an elephant for the first time in a dark room and are unable to understand what it is. Each of them touches only one part of the elephant's body, so their incomplete knowledge leads to incomplete understanding. One person believes that the elephant is like a gutter, another thinks of it as a fan, a third sees it like a pillar, and a fourth compares the elephant to a bed. While if they had turned on a light, they could have seen the whole truth and put an end to their disagreement!

H2 A Problem Called 'Scientism'

Who do you think is qualified enough to comment on the essence of human beings? Do we have to wait for centuries until scientists agree on the **truth of human essence**? Will such a time ever come? Even if it does, how can we guarantee that this definition will be in line with the **truth of human essence**?

If any of the theories proposed about the human being remained a personal belief, this issue would not be very important. Even if a social theory only remained in books and fell into obscurity, it still might not have much significance.

But the disturbing point here is that the theory of each researcher serves as a basis for decision-making, legislation, and individual as well as social behaviors not only in their own time but also for decades afterwards in various societies. Since scientists are considered the elites of society, many people blindly accept their views and follow them with statements such as "scientists say...," or "research has shown that...."

Throughout history, there have been many people who have been misled by a wrong theory tied to a rotten idea, and they have not found the right way to the end of their lives. Some examples include the theories of Bertrand Russell, the English philosopher, and those of Sigmund Freud, the Austrian psychologist, about human sexuality. Or much more extreme theories include those of Alfred Kinsey, the American biologist, that influenced all cultural and social values of the world.

H2 Who Is Qualified?

Let us return to the question that we raised earlier: “Who is qualified to comment on the essence of human beings?”

The reality is that some of us value our washing machines more than ourselves! When we buy a new washing machine and do not know how it works, we do not use it before reading the user guide. We fear that it might break down, causing all the money we spent to go to waste. We have a **heartfelt belief** that this washing machine have not come into existence randomly; someone has made it and has full knowledge of all its **dimensions**. Therefore, the most sensible thing to do is to ask the manufacturer if we have any questions. We have no doubt about this, and if anyone thinks or acts otherwise, we will be surprised. But unfortunately, when it comes to ourselves, we do not have the same point of view. We accept whatever anyone says without being sure that they are a qualified researcher, scientist, or scholar.

For those who do not believe in the existence of God, the explanation that follows requires some preliminary remarks that are not the subject of this article for the time being. We may address this issue in separate articles later on. But for those who believe that God created a phenomenon called the ‘human being,’ we will use the same reasoning that we presented above:

Just as the most reliable person to express an opinion about a phenomenon is its creator, the best authority to express an opinion about the true essence of human beings is God. Except for God and His deputies, the views of any other person, whether they are scientists or not, are either completely wrong or reflect just a small part of the truth. Knowing a small part of the **truth of the human essence** does not allow us to offer guidelines for the life of an eternal creature. That is because in that case, everyone looks at the human being from

his own perspective and tries to enhance only one dimension of human existence. This disturbs our spiritual balance, and we become like someone whose head is bigger than the rest of his body or whose one hand is longer than the other!

Throughout history, most schools of thought have considered their intellect sufficient to know the human being; they have provided one-dimensional definitions and introduced human beings as a subset of a group of animals with higher intelligence. These definitions are either wrong or incomplete because none of these schools have consulted the Creator to gain a correct understanding of the human essence. Only God the Creator can interpret our essence and existence as it truly is.

In the upcoming articles, we will explore the different dimensions of our existence from the viewpoint of our Creator. But before that, we invite you to share your opinions with us about the topics we have discussed so far.