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Research Article

Differences in Human Personality between This World and the Hereafter: Allameh Tabatabaʾi's Account

Mohsen Honarjo [1*], Mahdi Honarjoo [2]

1. Department of Law, Imam Khomeini Education and Research Institute, Qom, Iran. (Corresponding Author).*

2. Department of History and Civilization, Faculty of History and Civilization, University of Islamic Sciences.
mjh2790@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

SUBJECT & OBJECTIVES: This study examines how human personality can differ between worldly and eschatological life while personal identity endures. "Personality" is an etic analytical category, not a modern theory attributed to Tabatabaʾi. Moving beyond accounts centered on reciprocal character formation or soul–body unity, the analysis examines changing functions of embodiment, cognition, and conduct.

METHOD & FINDING: An interpretive close reading of al-Mīzān and selected philosophical works compares claims across these three dimensions and tests them against apparently contrary Quranic scenes. Passages are read in context, with explicit exegetical statements distinguished from philosophical inference. The soul grounds continuity; the worldly body is a setting of gradual formation, whereas eschatological embodiment discloses acquired qualities. Worldly knowledge is mediated and can be heedless; the hereafter unveils deeds and divine ownership without conferring omniscience. Speech, nourishment, and other postmortem acts are real, although they primarily express a formed disposition rather than create new earthly merit.

CONCLUSION: The proposed model moves from worldly formation through the closure of earthly testing at death to eschatological disclosure. It distinguishes the continuing subject from changing bodily qualities and explains why false speech, limited knowledge, and action can occur after death. The account requires an individuated soul; resemblance between bodies alone cannot establish numerical identity. Further comparison with contemporary identity theories and differentiation among postmortem stations would refine this reconstruction.

***Corresponding Author:**
Email: *mhonarjoo64@gmail.com*
ORCID: *0009-0009-1029-7390*

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Introduction

Human existence after death raises two related questions. Is the resurrected person numerically the one who lived and acted in this world? If so, how can that person's body, knowledge, and conduct differ so markedly? In Tabatabaʾi's philosophical anthropology, the first question concerns the continuing subject rather than the persistence of bodily particles (Tabatabaʾi, 1973, Vol. 10, pp. 118–119). His discussion of resurrection then allows the same subject to appear in another bodily mode (Vol. 19, p. 135). This distinction makes moral judgment intelligible without treating the hereafter as a replica of ordinary life.

The word personality needs care in this setting. Tabatabaʾi did not devise a theory of personality in the modern psychometric sense. His account of the soul, intention, habit, moral disposition, faith, and deed nonetheless permits an analysis of the person's characteristic orientation. He reads shākila, roughly the formed disposition from which characteristic action proceeds, in light of bodily constitution, surroundings, and acquired moral qualities (Tabatabaʾi, 1973, Vol. 13, pp. 192–193). Qarai renders the relevant clause of Quran 17:84 as "*Everyone acts according to his character*" (Qarai, 2005). Tabatabaʾi's formulation, al-fiʿl yumaththilu fāʿilahu wa al-ẓāhir ʿunwān al-bāṭin, links action to its agent and outward conduct to inward form (Vol. 13, p. 192).

Personal identity concerns who remains; personality concerns the kind of person the continuing subject has become. The soul grounds continuity, but embodied life is the setting in which attention, desire, and habits develop. In Quranic scenes of judgment, deeds are found present (18:49), bodily members testify (24:24), and concealed aspects of the person are disclosed (50:22). These scenes suggest a changed relation between inward character and outward appearance. They do not imply that embodiment or agency has disappeared. Personal identity and human individuality have been extensively discussed in Islamic philosophy, particularly in relation to the nature of the human soul and its role in preserving personal identity (Vahidi Mehrajardi et al., 2024).

The contrast sharpens in scenes of judgment. The condemned deny their past conduct even as bodily members bear witness (6:23; 24:24); they speak and request a return after earthly testing has ended (23:99–100; 37:20–33). Tabatabaʾi reads false speech as an expression of acquired habit (1973, Vol. 7, p. 51). Earthly acts can reshape a person's orientation; such postmortem acts chiefly express the orientation already acquired. A body capable of testimony and nourishment must also be taken seriously as bodily, without presuming that its physiology repeats the present organism.

The inquiry asks how personality differs between earthly and eschatological life while the person remains numerically the same. Its focus moves beyond the reciprocal shaping of character and action and the ontological unity of soul and body to examine changes in what embodiment, cognition, and conduct accomplish. The argument follows worldly formation, the end of earthly moral testing at death, and eschatological disclosure. Here "fixation" means the closure of that formative setting; it does not exclude

awareness, events, or further development in every postmortem state.

Conceptual Framework

1- Personality

In this paper, personality is an etic analytical category for the relatively durable arrangement of cognitions, desires, intentions, habits, and moral dispositions that shapes characteristic action. It is not a term or a completed psychometric theory attributed to Tabatabaʾi. Shākila, malaka (acquired disposition), niyya (intention), and khuluq (moral character) are closer to his conceptual vocabulary. His explanation of shākila connects inherited and bodily conditions with acquired qualities without reducing conduct to either (Tabatabaʾi, 1973, Vol. 13, pp. 192–193; Hemmatian et al., 2021, pp. 121–133).

2- Personal identity

Personal identity is the continuity by which experiences and acts belong to one subject despite change. Neither complete memory nor the survival of every bodily particle is required for this purpose. Tabatabaʾi takes the first-person subject to be the soul, to which bodily states and actions belong (1973, Vol. 10, pp. 118–119). This account explains why a changing body can remain the body of one person, while leaving the question of the soul's unique relation to its resurrected body for further analysis below.

3- Soul and body

Tabatabaʾi's account draws on the Sadraean view that the soul originates with bodily life and acquires a mode of subsistence beyond matter. His phrase al-rūḥ al-insānī huwa al-badan munshaʾan khalqan ākhar describes the human spirit as the body brought forth in another creation (1973, Vol. 12, p. 154). Bodily conditions can therefore shape temperament and action without making the soul reducible to the organism. This primary-text claim should be distinguished from secondary interpretations that describe the two as separate substances (cf. Sarkeshik et al., 2022, pp. 109–117).

4- Worldly and eschatological existence

"This world" designates an order of material mediation, temporal succession, concealed motives, and moral testing. "*The hereafter*" designates the order in which divine ownership, the self, and the enduring meaning of deeds become manifest (Quran 18:49; 50:22). Death and the intermediate state belong to the transition, but the present comparison addresses the general contrast with resurrection rather than every distinct postmortem station.

5- Embodiment of deeds

The embodiment or presence of deeds means that an act's outward occurrence passes while its inward relation to intention and the agent endures. Thus recompense cannot be described only as an externally assigned sanction: the Quran says the person finds deeds present (18:49), and Tabatabaʾi interprets this presence as more than recollection (1973, Vol. 13, p. 325). The resulting form cannot be calculated mechanically from a visible act alone; intention, repentance, faith, and the direction of a life matter to its final meaning.

Literature Review

Studies of Tabatabaʾi's anthropology have illuminated different parts of this question. Nasiri examines the soul's origination and survival, while also questioning how

consistently Tabatabaʾi reconciles philosophical commitments with Quran-by-Quran exegesis (2010, pp. 151–178). Khademi critically examines Tabatabaʾi's objections to Mulla Sadra's account of the soul's essential attachment to the body (2025, pp. 301–314). Sarkeshik, Fateminia, and Rafiei Honar offer a distinct reading of bodily and psychic relations (2022, pp. 97–119). These disagreements make it necessary to distinguish Tabatabaʾi's own formulations from later syntheses.

Arpanahi Istadegi, Khazaei, and Sadeghi (2023, pp. 341–366) examine whether Tabatabaʾi's account of personal identity entails a duality of substances or permits a unified understanding of the human being. Their discussion of soul–body interaction and substantial development brings the ontological basis of personal continuity into focus. It does not principally compare the bodily, epistemic, and behavioral functions of that continuing person in worldly life and the hereafter; those changes are the concern of the present inquiry.

Work on corporeal resurrection supplies a second strand. Badashti and Rezaei-Rad (2015, pp. 61–72) defend its bodily reality in Tabatabaʾi; Bathaei (2017, pp. 41–51) compares his account with Mulla Sadra. Ebrahimi (2025, pp. 7–24) develops the idea of embodiment proportionate to acquired dispositions, while Rajabi and Olyanasab (2025, pp. 177–198) examine the tension between sameness and likeness. Together, these studies caution against identifying resurrection with either the recovery of every material particle or a merely figurative body.

A related body of scholarship concerns character and conduct. Hemmatian et al. (2021, pp. 115–137) explain the reciprocal effects of shākila and voluntary action, tracing their consequences into the intermediate state and resurrection through the embodiment of deeds. The enduring significance of acquired dispositions after death is therefore already established in this literature. Olyanasab and Emaminia (2024, pp. 123–144) distinguish conventional punishment from the ontological presence of actions, while Azadi (2024) examines material life in relation to other dimensions of human existence in Tabatabaʾi and Motahhari.

These studies leave a more specific problem open. Hemmatian et al. (2021) elucidate the reciprocal formation of character and behavior, including its postmortem consequences; Arpanahi Istadegi et al. (2023) examine the soul–body basis of numerical identity. Neither question, on its own, explains how the functions of embodiment, knowledge, and conduct differ once earthly testing has ended. This paper develops that comparison through formation, the closure of formative testing, and disclosure, testing the account against scriptural scenes of false speech, incapacity to prostrate, and bodily nourishment in the hereafter. Parfit's branching cases and Olson's animalism raise further identity questions (Parfit, 1984; Olson, 1997); a systematic comparison with contemporary theories remains beyond its scope.

Research Method

This is an interpretive reconstruction of Tabatabaʾi's exegetical and philosophical writings, based on close reading rather than a formally coded qualitative dataset. The inquiry uses three questions—what persists, what becomes known, and what acts mean

after death—to organize passages on soul and body, cognition, and conduct. Within each dimension, it compares relevant Quranic scenes with Tabatabaʾi's explanations and tests broad formulations against passages that appear to resist them. It does not claim a numbered set of coded units, independent coders, or measured agreement.

The primary texts are al-Mīzān fī tafsīr al-Qurʾān and selected discussions in Bidāyat al-ḥikma, Nihāyat al-ḥikma, and Principles of Philosophy and the Method of Realism. Passages were selected where they bear directly on continuity of the person, the acquired form of the soul, or postmortem knowledge and action; specialist studies were used to identify competing readings. Direct Quranic quotations follow Ali Quli Qarai's (2005) translation; descriptions of Quranic scenes without quotation marks are the authors' paraphrases. English renderings of non-Quranic Arabic and Persian passages are working translations of the cited texts unless otherwise indicated.

Three interpretive safeguards govern the reading. First, an explicit statement by Tabatabaʾi is distinguished from an inference drawn across his works. Second, quotations are considered in their exegetical or philosophical setting rather than detached from the argument. Third, apparent counterexamples—false speech despite unveiled truth, or action after the end of earthly obligation—are retained and explained rather than suppressed. These procedures support a coherent reading; they do not substitute for intercoder validation, and the resulting synthesis remains open to disagreement over particular texts.

1. Soul, Body, and the Continuity of the Person

1.1. The Soul as the Criterion of Identity

What persists through bodily change? Tabatabaʾi appeals to the unity of immediate self-awareness despite changes in matter, age, health, and memory (1973, Vol. 10, pp. 118–119). In his discussion of Pharaoh's preserved body at Quran 10:92, he distinguishes a person from the changing collection of bodily components. Elsewhere, in answering objections to resurrection, he locates the human being's identity in the spirit rather than in numerical persistence of bodily matter (Tabatabaʾi, 1973, Vol. 19, p. 135).

Embodiment remains indispensable even if bodily particles do not determine numerical identity. The soul secures the subject's continuity, while bodily constitution and social circumstances affect appetite, attention, vulnerability, and opportunities for action. In his account of shākila, Tabatabaʾi explicitly includes bodily composition and acquired moral form (1973, Vol. 13, p. 192). Recent interpreters disagree about the metaphysics of this relation (Sarkeshik et al., 2022, pp. 97–119), but the importance of embodied history to character does not depend on settling that dispute.

Memory illustrates the distinction. Forgetting, sleep, or neurological loss need not interrupt personhood, although they may alter what can be recalled or done. The claim that the first-person subject exceeds its changing bodily states is central to Tabatabaʾi's argument (1973, Vol. 10, pp. 118–119). Arpanahi Istadegi and colleagues (2023, pp. 354–366) discuss its bearing on identity. Eschatological

recollection and the presence of deeds would then disclose an enduring subject's history rather than produce another subject.

1.2. Worldly Embodiment as a Field of Gradual Formation

Worldly embodiment operates under matter, time, need, and gradual causation. Sensory knowledge depends on organs; movement requires energy and succession; eating repairs bodily loss. These conditions help explain why intention may meet resistance and why repeated effort can establish a disposition. Tabatabaʾi's broader account of human development is set out in Bidāyat al-ḥikma and Principles of Philosophy and the Method of Realism (1996; 2011); Nasiri (2010, pp. 165–176) discusses the bodily dimension of this account. The temporal gap between intention and accomplished action is also a condition in which responsibility can be exercised.

The worldly body is a body of capacity. Education, worship, relationships, and repeated choice help actualize powers that were initially only potential. Resisting appetite can form restraint, and difficult truthful speech can gradually become a habit. Sadraean discussions of substantial development frame this possibility (Shirazi, 1981, Vols. 8–9; Tabatabaʾi, 1986). Hemmatian and colleagues (2021, pp. 121–133) trace the reciprocal effects of action and shākila: a choice changes the agent's readiness to notice, desire, and act again.

This reciprocal influence should not be cast as occasional contact between a soul and a bodily container. Tabatabaʾi's description of the spirit as bodily existence brought forth in another creation points to a developmental relation (1973, Vol. 12, p. 154). Secondary interpreters do not agree on its metaphysical implications; some employ a two-substance vocabulary (Sarkeshik et al., 2022, pp. 109–117). The narrower claim needed here is that a person's embodied history shapes dispositions, although bodily particles do not by themselves individuate the resurrected subject.

1.3. Death as the End of Formative Testing, Not the Annihilation of the Person

Quran 32:11 describes the angel of death taking the person (yatawaffākum). Tabatabaʾi argues that the organism's worldly integration ends while the soul and the relation of deeds to their agent remain preserved (1973, Vol. 20, pp. 259–260).
On this reading, judgment addresses the subject who believed and acted; death does not insert a period of nonbeing between two numerically different people.

Death changes more than the person's location. The request to return in order to act righteously is refused (Quran 23:99–100; Tabatabaʾi, 1973, Vol. 15, pp. 67–69). Earthly opportunities for repentance and a basic redirection of life thus come to an end. The person may still know, regret, speak, and encounter changes in the intermediate state; such experiences should not be confused with a renewed life of open moral testing.

The term "fixation" thus marks the end of earthly testing, not the cessation of experience. Postmortem experience may disclose and develop what was acquired, but the argument does not assume that the barzakh and every station of resurrection are identical or static.

1.4. The Eschatological Body as Corporeal and Proportionate

Tabatabaʾi refuses to make the return of the same particles the criterion of resurrection. In discussing a body corresponding to the worldly one, he says that the human being's

identity belongs to the spirit; an elderly person likewise remains the one who had a younger body (1973, Vol. 19, p. 135). The analogy shows that bodily alteration need not destroy identity, but it does not settle a duplication case. Two bodies could resemble one predecessor, so resemblance alone cannot establish that either is numerically the same person. Tabatabaʾi's claim instead presupposes the continuity of one individuated soul. How that one soul is uniquely related to one resurrected body requires a further metaphysical account; the aging analogy by itself cannot provide it.

In Sadraean thought, individuation follows existence: one person's identity rests on the continuing soul, not resemblance between bodies (Shirazi, 1981, Vol. 9, p. 190). The otherworldly body is not an independent duplicate subsequently assigned to that soul; it arises from the soul according to its acquired qualities (Shirazi, 1981, Vol. 9, p. 200). Thus, two indistinguishable bodies would not constitute two continuations of one person, since their likeness cannot duplicate one individuated existence. This is a Sadraean response to the objection, not an argument explicitly advanced by Tabatabaʾi. The precise relation between intermediate imaginal embodiment and final resurrection remains a separate issue.

Interpretations differ over this body's precise mode. Bathaei (2017, pp. 45–50) stresses the comparison with Sadraean resurrection; Ebrahimi (2025, pp. 18–23) develops the body's attainment to the soul; Rajabi and Olyanasab (2025, pp. 190–197) examine sameness and likeness. The defensible common ground is narrower: corporeal resurrection is real, personal continuity is grounded in the soul, and the new embodiment need not reproduce worldly decay or metabolism. Differences among intermediate and final states should not be collapsed.

The relation between inward form and outward embodiment also changes. A worldly person's visible health or beauty says little about moral excellence, while bodily testimony at judgment exposes participation in deeds (Quran 24:24). The Quran's contrasting faces at resurrection provide another image of disclosure (3:106–107). Ebrahimi (2025, pp. 18–23) reads the body as increasingly proportionate to stable qualities of the soul. This is an account of real embodiment, not a claim that each bodily feature can be inferred mechanically from a particular worldly act.

Embodiment consequently takes on different roles in the two orders. The worldly body participates in forming personality by providing needs, limitations, habits, and opportunities for responsible action. The eschatological body manifests personality by bearing the stable form of the soul and the consequences of action. Identity continuity is therefore compatible with profound bodily difference: the owner of the personality is unchanged, while the mode in which that personality becomes visible is transformed.

2. Differences in the Epistemic Constitution of the Person

2.1. Worldly Cognition: Mediation, Signs, and Heedlessness

Worldly cognition ordinarily proceeds through sensation, concepts, testimony, and inference. Signs can be misunderstood, and attention can stop at apparent causes. Faith in the unseen, praised in (Quran 2:3) , occurs without possession of the full eschatological reality. Tabatabaʾi's discussion of that verse treats this distance as a setting for faith and guidance

(1973, Vol. 1, pp. 45–46). It is within such mediated understanding that inquiry, refusal, and trust acquire moral significance.

Tabatabaʾi distinguishes a truth's existence from a person's awareness of it. The dependence of apparent causes on God is real already, yet attachment to those causes can obscure it. Qarai renders the address to the person in (Quran 50:22) as follows: "*You were certainly oblivious of this. We have removed your veil from you, and so today your eyesight is acute*." Tabatabaʾi takes the removed veil to concern the disclosure of a reality previously concealed by worldly preoccupation (1973, Vol. 18, pp. 350–351).

It is useful to distinguish natural limitation from acquired heedlessness. Finite embodied persons must learn and may not grasp every consequence. Desire and repeated wrongdoing can also direct attention away from unwelcome truths. The latter possibility belongs to moral character because earlier choices affect later receptivity; Hemmatian and colleagues (2021, pp. 125–132) discuss this feedback. Tabatabaʾi's reflections on knowledge and human agency give the wider philosophical setting (2011).

2.2. Unveiling: From Report to Presence

Eschatological unveiling reduces the distance between knower and known. Tabatabaʾi reads the removal of the veil in Quran 50:22 as the disclosure of the dependence of causes upon God (1973, Vol. 18, pp. 350–351). The person also finds deeds present rather than only hearing about their endurance (Quran 18:49; Tabatabaʾi, 1973, Vol. 13, p. 325). These passages support an epistemic contrast between worldly signs and the encounter with an enduring reality; they do not say that every hidden fact becomes known to every person.

Several objects of disclosure meet in these scenes. (Quran 17:13–14) depicts a person reading a record of deeds, while bodily members testify in 24:24 and secrets are examined in 86:9. Tabatabaʾi's discussion of the presence of deeds (1973, Vol. 13, p. 325) helps connect these images: the person's history is no longer easily separated from the self that made it. Their relation is an interpretive synthesis, not an assertion that the verses describe a single undifferentiated event.

Unveiling, however, is not identical for the blessed and the wretched. Both encounter realities previously hidden, but awareness accompanied by love, receptivity, and moral affinity differs from awareness accompanied by regret, hostility, or loss. Knowledge that one's earlier denial was false does not retroactively become the virtue of freely chosen faith before disclosure. The hereafter is therefore not a classroom in which equal information automatically produces equal perfection. Truth is encountered through the capacity and orientation the person has acquired.

2.3. Why Unveiling Does Not Mean Omniscience or Universal Guidance

The removal of a decisive veil does not imply omniscience. The Quran also speaks of blindness (17:72), and of people who cannot prostrate when called to do so (68:42–43). These texts do not by themselves establish a complete taxonomy of afterlife knowledge; they do show that disclosure can coexist with deprivation or incapacity. Tabatabaʾi relates the failure to prostrate to entrenched arrogance (1973, Vol. 19, p. 385). The distinction between

available truth, finite comprehension, and moral receptivity is the inference drawn here from these passages.

False speech tests the account. A lie can deceive human observers in worldly life. (Quran 6:23) nevertheless depicts denial at judgment, and Tabatabaʾi takes such speech to express a settled habit of lying (1973, Vol. 7, p. 51). The testimony of deeds and the body prevents the utterance from concealing the relevant facts. Its occurrence reveals the speaker's character rather than making falsehood true; see also Tabatabaʾi's discussion of entrenched dispositions manifesting at judgment (Vol. 16, p. 383).

Those invited to prostrate at a station of resurrection are unable to do so, despite once having had the bodily opportunity (Quran 68:42–43). Tabatabaʾi relates this incapacity to an acquired disposition of arrogance (1973, Vol. 19, p. 385). The point is not muscular weakness. The scene discloses the person's formed relation to humility when a new act can no longer serve the purpose of earthly testing.

2.4. Self-Knowledge, Memory, and the Testimony of the Body

Eschatological knowledge is profoundly self-referential. Worldly self-deception permits a person to redescribe domination as responsibility, greed as prudence, or habitual wrongdoing as an exceptional lapse. When secrets are tested and deeds become present, such narrative control collapses. The book of deeds is not simply an external administrative record; it is the exact intelligibility of the path the person has made. Hence the command to read one's own book and the statement that one's soul suffices as reckoner (Quran 17:13–14; 86:9).

Bodily testimony gives self-knowledge an embodied form. The Quran describes tongues, hands, and feet bearing witness (24:24; 36:65). The body that enacted intentions can no longer serve simply as an instrument of concealment. Reading these scenes alongside Tabatabaʾi's exegesis (1973, Vol. 15, pp. 94–95; Vol. 17, p. 103), one may say that embodied participation itself becomes legible at judgment. That reading remains compatible with his insistence that the soul grounds the identity of the person whose members testify.

The presence of action also changes the relation between self-knowledge and memory. Ordinary autobiographical recall may fail, but the deed is not thereby lost. The Quran says, "*They will find present whatever they had done*" (18:49, trans. Qarai). Tabatabaʾi reads this as the presence of action rather than a mere report of a remote event (1973, Vol. 13, p. 325). The person's history becomes part of the condition in which judgment is experienced.

The difference between the two orders is not merely quantitative. In worldly life, knowledge can help form personality because the person can respond, revise habits, and reorder desire. In the hereafter, the formed personality substantially determines how truth is experienced: as nearness and joy, or as loss and regret. Worldly cognition participates in formation; eschatological cognition discloses and actualizes epistemic character.

3. Differences in the Behavioral Constitution of the Person

3.1. Worldly Action as Self-Formation

In worldly life, intention, execution, and result can be separated by time and resistance. A person may deliberate and act against an established habit. Each choice

can affect later readiness; repetition gradually stabilizes a disposition. Tabatabaʾi's account of shākila connects conduct with the agent's formed qualities (1973, Vol. 13, pp. 192–193). Hemmatian and colleagues (2021, pp. 121–133) develop the reciprocal relation between personality and behavior. The resulting sequence is feedback, not one-way determination.

Shākila is not a deterministic fate. Bodily temperament, social environment, and previous conduct create strong tendencies, but they do not eliminate responsibility. If shākila compelled action without remainder, instruction, repentance, discipline, and blame would lose meaning. In this world, a person can act against an entrenched habit, initially with difficulty, and establish another orientation. The possibility may become more costly as a disposition deepens, but it remains part of the order of testing (Quran 17:84; Tabatabaʾi, 1973, Vol. 13, pp. 192–193).

Intention explains why physically similar acts can shape different personalities. Feeding another person for praise and feeding another for God may share an outward movement while differing in existential direction. The worldly gap between appearance and motive allows both hypocrisy and sincere hidden goodness. Eschatological recompense is not blind to this gap because action appears with the orientation that constituted its moral reality. The object of judgment is not a photograph of movement but the act as the act of a particular agent.

3.2. The End of Moral Testing without the End of Every Act

The end of taklīf, or earthly moral testing, does not end willing, speech, movement, or desire. The Quran depicts both joy and dispute after death. The plea "My Lord! Take me back, that I may act righteously in what I have left behind" identifies the lost opportunity as belonging to this life (Quran 23:99–100, trans. Qarai; Tabatabaʾi, 1973, Vol. 15, pp. 67–69). Postmortem action is therefore real, but it does not open a fresh earthly career of repentance and basic self-reconstruction.

Eschatological agency is therefore real but dispositional. The blessed will what accords with purified desire; the condemned react from regret, hostility, or entrenched habits. Freedom should not be reduced to indefinite self-recreation. A person can arrive at a state in which the very capacities through which alternatives were once pursued have been shaped in a stable direction. Resurrection reveals this acquired freedom: not arbitrary openness to every possibility, but the concrete range of response the person has made possible.

The invitation to prostrate again shows the distinction. The scene is not a renewed opportunity to acquire humility; it discloses whether humility became part of the person when prostration was possible under testing. The inability of the arrogant is an eschatological act—or failure to act—whose function is evidential and retributive, not formative. Body, will, and disposition appear as one event (Quran 68:42–43; Tabatabaʾi, 1973, Vol. 19, p. 385).

3.3. Speech, Confession, and Falsehood

Worldly speech conveys meaning but also manages reputation, conceals motives, persuades, and creates social versions of the speaker. Eschatological texts describe both silence and extensive conversation. The apparent tension is resolved by

distinguishing stations and divine permission: at some moments speech is withheld; at others confession, dispute, blame, or praise occurs. The end of worldly testing does not erase language. It changes the authority and function of language (Quran 36:65; 37:20–33; 77:35–36).

Eschatological speech can express regret, expose relations of domination, or manifest a settled disposition. The Quran portrays followers and leaders disputing responsibility (14:21–22; 33:67–68). A habitual liar may still speak falsely, yet the utterance cannot conceal facts that testimony and judgment make manifest (Tabatabaʾi, 1973, Vol. 16, p. 383). In this setting speech reveals the speaker more readily than it controls the account of what occurred.

The same transformation deepens the meaning of truthfulness. Worldly truthfulness is a virtue exercised under the possibility and temptation of falsehood; repeated truthful speech helps form a truthful person. The speech of the blessed in the hereafter is a more immediate harmony of inward and outward, no longer requiring defensive self-presentation. The speech of the wretched, by contrast, can expose the discord between settled desire and undeniable reality. In both cases, language becomes revelatory.

3.4. Eating and Drinking beyond Biological Compensation

Eating and drinking are bodily acts, although their eschatological reality should not be inferred directly from worldly metabolism. In this life, nourishment repairs loss and answers recurring deficiency. The Quran nevertheless describes fruits, meat, water, and other drink in the garden (47:15; 52:22; 56:20–21). These descriptions support real enjoyment; the further claim that its relation to need and permanence differs from familiar physiology is a philosophical interpretation of their eschatological setting.

In his commentary on Sūrat al-Insān, Tabatabaʾi suggests that the drink of the righteous may be understood in relation to their fulfilled vows and selfless feeding (1973, Vol. 20, pp. 125–126; Quran 76:5–12). An exclusively allegorical reading would treat paradisiacal food and drink only as figures for immaterial reward. That reading loses the corporeal force of the verses; conversely, a merely physiological reading misses the relation between the blessing and the agent's deeds. The nourishment is real and morally intelligible.

Painful food and drink likewise need not be reduced to literary symbols. Their eschatological reality can express a soul's settled relation to desire and wrongdoing. Here, nourishment discloses character; in worldly life, responses to need—restraint, greed, fasting, or generosity—help form it.

3.5. The Presence and Embodiment of Deeds

The presence of deeds links worldly behavior with eschatological character. Quran 3:30 and 18:49 describe persons finding what they did present. Tabatabaʾi interprets this presence as more than an externally assigned reward or punishment (1973, Vol. 13, p. 325). His related discussion of the manifestation of entrenched dispositions at judgment (Vol. 16, p. 383) clarifies why action and the person who performed it cannot be treated as wholly disconnected at judgment.

An act's outward occurrence passes, but its relation to intention and the agent has an enduring significance. Under

eschatological conditions its inward reality may become experiential; this is how Tabatabaʾi reads the presence of deeds (1973, Vol. 13, p. 325). Olyanasab and Emaminia (2024, pp. 132–141) distinguish that ontological account from merely conventional sanction. The claim explains a dimension of recompense without implying that divine judgment can be reduced to an automatic physical conversion of each visible movement.

Methodological caution remains necessary. Not every Quranic image should be dissolved into a merely psychological state, and not every reward should be tied mechanically to one isolated action. Personality is the result of faith, intention, practice, repentance, relationship, and divine judgment. Repentance may transform the moral reality of an earlier deed; ostentation may empty an apparently good act. The embodied deed is the final truth of action in relation to its agent, not the visible shell abstracted from the whole life.

Pleasure and pain illuminate the same relation from another angle. Worldly enjoyment is interrupted by loss, habituation, and fear. Eschatological recompense can be understood as a more abiding experience proportionate to acquired dispositions, without reducing the rewards and punishments of scripture to inward states. Tabatabaʾi's reading of the presence of deeds supplies the link between action and recompense (1973, Vol. 13, p. 325; cf. Quran 3:30; 18:49).

3.6. Social Action and the Disclosure of Relationships

Shākila has a social history as well as an individual one. Imitation, praise, fear, family obligations, economic exchange, and political obedience exert pressures within which moral dispositions develop. Compliance may normalize wrongdoing, while resistance to unjust expectations can strengthen moral independence. Neither response transfers responsibility wholly to society: the issue is how the person comes to act under these pressures (Tabatabaʾi, 1973, Vol. 13, pp. 192–193).

Eschatological social scenes disclose relations hidden by worldly advantage. Followers and leaders dispute responsibility (Quran 34:31–33; 37:27–33), while alliances based on transient interest prove fragile (43:67). Tabatabaʾi comments on these passages within his wider account of judgment (1973, Vol. 16, pp. 382–383; Vol. 17, pp. 132–133; Vol. 18, pp. 120–121). The resulting picture is neither social isolation nor a simple continuation of worldly institutions: relationships are evaluated by their truth and consequences.

4. The Integrated Model: Formation, Fixation, and Disclosure

The dimensions converge in a recurring process: belief directs attention and desire, intention becomes action in bodily and social conditions, and repeated action shapes disposition. Disposition in turn affects later attention and action. Tabatabaʾi's explanation of shākila supports the reciprocal link (1973, Vol. 13, pp. 192–193), which Hemmatian and colleagues discuss in detail (2021, pp. 121–133). Instruction and repentance can interrupt the pattern during worldly life. Death closes that regime of testing, while later body, cognition, and conduct make the acquired orientation more apparent.

Table 1. Formation, fixation, and disclosure across the three dimensions of personality

Dimension	Worldly formation	Transition at death	Eschatological disclosure	Source
Soul and body	The enduring soul develops through a material, temporal, needy body.	Worldly organic governance ends; personal identity remains through the soul.	A corporeal body proportionate to the acquired form of the soul manifests the person.	Tabataba'i (1973), Vol. 10, pp. 118–119; Vol. 19, p. 135; Vol. 20, pp. 259–260.
Cognition	Knowledge is mediated by signs and causes and remains open to inquiry, error, and heedlessness.	The formative value of faith before compulsory disclosure is closed.	Divine ownership, the self, and deeds become present, within finite capacity and acquired orientation.	Tabataba'i (1973), Vol. 1, pp. 45–46; Vol. 13, p. 325; Vol. 18, pp. 350–351.
Behavior	Intention and repeated action create habit, disposition, responsibility, and the possibility of repentance.	The open field of taklīf and basic self-reconstruction ends.	Speech, desire, nourishment, and other acts disclose and enact established dispositions and recompense.	Tabataba'i (1973), Vol. 13, pp. 192–193; Vol. 15, pp. 67–69; Vol. 19, p. 385; Vol. 20, pp. 125–126.

The interplay becomes concrete in eschatological acts. Speech in resurrection is behavioral, but its content arises from cognition and disposition and is uttered through a body that can no longer guarantee concealment. Eating and drinking are bodily acts, but their quality depends on the soul's affinity and its awareness of divine gift or loss. Inability to prostrate is behavioral, but its source is not muscular weakness; it is the embodied form of entrenched arrogance. Pleasure and pain are neither merely bodily sensations nor merely mental judgments; they are unified experiences of the soul–body person.

This account also places the consequences of conduct along a temporal arc. The effects of action begin in worldly life: lying erodes trust, envy narrows attention, generosity expands concern, and worship reorganizes desire. Yet these effects remain mixed with forgetfulness, social appearance, material limits, and the possibility of reversal. The hereafter is the completion of disclosure, not because worldly consequences were unreal, but because their relation to the whole person becomes explicit and stable. The person encounters a world that is morally recognizable as the outcome of a life, although its existence and intensity depend on divine creation and judgment rather than private imagination.

Conclusion

Tabataba'i's account permits a distinction between the continuity of the responsible subject and the mutability of that person's worldly properties. The soul sustains personal identity without requiring an unchanged bodily substrate; embodied life supplies the needs and practical resistance through which dispositions are cultivated. Resurrection remains corporeal, although its embodiment makes acquired qualities more apparent. This account presupposes an individuated soul: bodily resemblance

alone, as the duplication objection shows, cannot establish numerical identity.

Worldly knowing proceeds through signs and limited attention. It can guide conduct while remaining vulnerable to error, self-deception, and heedlessness. Eschatological disclosure brings deeds and their significance into view without conferring unlimited knowledge or moral perfection. False speech may still arise from an entrenched disposition, but it can no longer secure the concealment that a lie sometimes achieves in earthly society.

Conduct changes in function as well. Speech, desire, nourishment, regret, and social encounter remain real beyond death, although they no longer open an unrestricted field of morally formative testing. During earthly life, repeated choice and repentance can redirect a person's orientation; later acts chiefly manifest the disposition acquired. The presence of deeds makes the relation between intention, action, and recompense perceptible, while even failure to prostrate may disclose a habit established when prostration was freely possible.

The sequence of formation, fixation, and disclosure accordingly connects bodily, epistemic, and behavioral differences in a single account of the enduring person. Its contribution is not a new theory of substantial unity or a first account of character's lasting effects. Rather, it explains how capacities involved in shaping personality during worldly life assume predominantly revelatory roles in the eschatological order. Fixation marks the closure of earthly self-reconstruction, not the termination of every postmortem event or change.

The term personality is an analytical category applied to propositions dispersed across Tabataba'i's exegetical and philosophical writings, not a psychometric construct of his own making. Much of the specialist secondary literature is available primarily in Persian, which limits independent access for some readers. The inquiry also leaves unsettled the detailed relation between intermediate embodiment and final resurrection and the full metaphysical treatment of duplication cases. More focused study of these questions, including dialogue with contemporary theories of personal identity, could further test the proposed interpretation.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no potential conflict of interest regarding the publication of this work. In addition, the ethical issues including plagiarism, informed consent, misconduct, data fabrication and/or falsification, double publication and/or submission, and redundancy have been completely witnessed by the authors.

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AUTHOR BIOSKETCHES

Mohsen Honarjo. *Department of Law, Imam Khomeini Education and Research Institute, Qom, Iran.*
Email: *mhonarjoo64@gmail.com*
ORCID: *https://orcid.org/0009-0009-1029-7390*

Mahdi Honarjoo. *Department of History and Civilization, Faculty of History and Civilization, University of Islamic Sciences,Iran.*
Email: *mjh2790@gmail.com*
ORCID: *https://orcid.org/0009-0000-5413-8978*

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