



## Research Paper

# The Origin and Evolution of Human Moral Character According to Allameh Tabatabaei

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## Abstract

The present research seeks to examine the views of Allameh Tabatabaei on the origin and evolution of human moral character and draw the theoretical framework and the general structure of this theory based on his opinion. To do this, first, the issues related to the moral character of man and their answers were extracted from the works of Allameh Tabatabaei and were interpreted and analyzed with a rational-analytical approach. Due to the importance of problem-oriented, this study addresses two main issues: 1) What is the origin of the emergence of moral character from the perspective of Allameh Tabatabaei? 2) What are the internal and external-environmental factors of the growth and evolution of human moral character from his point of view? In the interpretation of Sharif al-Mizan, Allameh considers Shakeleh as the meaning of temperament and considers it to be a set of psychological traits of a human being that emerges in his relationship with objects and persons. Therefore, according to Allameh's philosophical analysis regarding temperament and the quality of its creation in individuals, he considered temperament as one of the sources of moral character. Allameh has mentioned internal and external (environmental) factors for the growth and evolution of human moral character. Internal factors are placed in three cognitive, emotional, and functional areas. From his point of view, essence and nature are internal factors, but the most important internal factor in his opinion is free will. Moreover, Allameh refers to external (environmental) factors, that are outside of man's essence and are in the circumstances and atmosphere of his life, such as customs and traditions, imitation habits, and the influence of society, geographical environment, family, peers, and so on.

**Keywords:**

Moral Character; Allameh Tabatabaei; Growth Factors; Genesis; Moral Evolution; Properties

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## Extended Abstract

### 1. Introduction

The main focus of this study is the "emergence and evolution of human moral character according to Allameh Tabatabaei", which means drawing the framework of the theory of moral character based on his opinion. With this statement, what is discussed in this study from Allameh Tabatabaei's point of view are his personality theory, its foundations, and its components. This research, considering the findings of contemporary thinkers, asks the modern questions of moral psychologists about the moral character of the great contemporary Islamic philosopher, Allameh Tabatabaei. The term "moral character" or "character" refers to a set of traits and qualities that are relatively stable in a person's thoughts, words, and actions. These traits are usually a group of motivational and emotional elements and beliefs that a person can cultivate in himself. Regarding moral character, various issues can be raised: 1) whether morality is inherent and natural or whether it is acquired; 2) the possibility of changing morals; 3) the factors of moral character formation and the factors of its change; 4) discussion of acquired attributes and virtues; 5) the quality of attributing traits to the self: essential movement or transverse attribution; and 6) the possibility of modification and the factors of moral personality transformation. This study, considering the findings of contemporary thinkers, aims to ask the modern questions of moral psychologists about moral character from the great philosopher of contemporary Islam, Allameh Tabatabaei: 1) What is the origin of the emergence and construction of moral character? 2) What are the internal and external-environmental factors of the growth and evolution of human moral character?

### 2. Method

The dominant approach in this research is the rational-analytical approach, which examines Allameh's works through conceptual, propositional, and systemic analysis. Moreover, using a comparative and sometimes historical approach, this study compares the similarities and differences of Allameh's view with other thinkers.

### 3. Findings

Allameh Tabatabaei, in the discussion of the Quranic concept of Shakeleh, has discussed the personality characteristics of people in Tafsir al-Mizan. Additionally, his philosophical analyses of nature and the quality of creating ethics in humans can also be analyzed as the source of moral character. He has also spoken about some moral qualities in the Platonic-Aristotelian philosophical theory based on character, and in the commentary of Sharif al-Mizan, he has talked about some moral qualities that distinguish a person from others and also the reason for the excellence of his character and personality. In the interpretation of Sharif al-Mizan, Allameh considers Shakeleh as the meaning of temperament and considers it as a set of psychological traits of a human being that emerges in his relationship with objects and persons. Therefore, according to Allameh's philosophical analysis regarding temperament and the quality of its creation in individuals, he considered temperament as one of the sources of moral character. Allameh has mentioned internal and external (environmental) factors for the growth and evolution of human moral character. Internal factors are placed in three cognitive, emotional, and functional areas. From his point of view, essence and nature are internal factors, but the most important internal factor in his opinion is free will. Moreover, Allameh refers to external (environmental) factors, that are outside of man's essence and are in the circumstances and atmosphere of his life,



such as customs and traditions, imitation habits, and the influence of society, geographical environment, family, peers, and so on.

#### 4. Result

The moral function of man is an active process with the origin of nature (nature, temperament, and physical affairs) which involves the regulation of human behavior by knowledge in the context of the norms and values of the environment, in such a way that over time, practice, and experience, this arrangement is internalized for humans as the underlying self-made values of behavior, and then it becomes in the form of Shakeleh, which is the secondary properties of the soul and can create another body for the soul, which is the form of his inner self. Allameh Tabatabaei has mentioned the personal characteristics of people in the discussion of the Quranic concept of Shakeleh. Based on this, the concept of Shakeleh can be considered as the same as the concept of personality. In his commentary on al-Mizan, Allameh has introduced Shakeleh as the meaning of temperament and moral properties and considered temperament to be a set of psychological traits of a human being, which in fact emerges from the relationship of this temperament with other people. Therefore, with these interpretations, it can be acknowledged that according to Allameh's philosophical analysis in the discussion of temperament and the quality of its creation in people, temperament can be considered as one of the sources of moral character. Allameh has spoken about primary and secondary nature in many cases. The primary nature of man is shared with animals, and the meaning of secondary nature is the actualization of the potential

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abilities of primary nature and the place of practical rationality in humans. In an upward course, according to cognitive abilities, man moves away from that primary nature, and after becoming a rational being, he acquires a secondary nature. According to Allameh, these natural properties have a series of internal factors, such as essence and nature, which, according to him, the most important internal factor is human free will, and a series of external (environmental) factors that are outside of man's nature and are in the circumstances and atmosphere of his life, such as customs, traditions, habits, and the influence of society, geographical environment, family, friends, peers, and even friendship with infidels.

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#### Author contribution

Banafshe Ramazani, the first author, is an M.A. graduate of the Department of Philosophy and Islamic Theology of Mazandaran University, and Fereshte Abolhasani Niarki, the second author, is an assistant professor of the Department of Islamic Philosophy and Theology of Mazandaran University.

#### Conflict of interest

There is no conflict of interest in this article.

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