

# Being Human? Artificial Intelligence and Eschatological Visions of Personhood in Christian and Islamic Theology

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Received: 04 November 2025, Accepted: 15 December 2025, Published: 17 December 2025

**Abstract:** This article explores the theological implications of artificial intelligence (AI) for human identity and personhood from both Christian and Islamic perspectives. As AI increasingly simulates capacities once considered uniquely human—such as cognition, creativity, and emotional responsiveness—it raises fundamental questions about what, if anything, irreducibly distinguishes humans from machines. Drawing on theological anthropology and eschatology, the article examines whether and how doctrines such as the *imago Dei* in Christianity and *khalīfat Allāh* in Islam are challenged, transformed, or rearticulated in light of artificial cognition. Special attention is given to concepts of soul, consciousness, and the afterlife, including critical engagement with transhumanist visions of digital immortality. Employing a comparative and dialogical approach, the article argues that religious traditions provide indispensable resources for articulating the spiritual, ethical, and metaphysical dimensions of personhood. Rather than offering definitive answers, it opens up a space for theological imagination and interreligious reflection at the intersection of AI, eschatology, and human identity in an increasingly technologically advanced world.

**Keywords:** Artificial Intelligence, Theological Anthropology, Personhood, Interreligious Dialogue

## 1. Introduction

In an era when artificial intelligence (AI) increasingly simulates—and, in certain domains, even surpasses—capacities traditionally regarded as uniquely human, such as creativity, abstract reasoning, and emotional responsiveness, the question of what it fundamentally means to be human has attracted growing attention across philosophy, ethics, and theology. As machines generate texts, artworks, and affective responses that appear intelligent or empathetic, the conventional boundary between human and machine becomes porous. This convergence challenges long-held anthropological assumptions and compels a reevaluation of the irreducible core of personhood: Is it merely cognitive performance, or does it point to a spiritual and metaphysical depth that transcends artificial replication? This tension between the programmable and the transcendent not only raises anthropological questions, but also eschatological ones: What is the human being ultimately called to become—and can that destiny be simulated? Are we witnessing the advent of a novel mode of being—or simply an increasingly sophisticated simulacrum? Can machines genuinely participate in meaning, or do they merely replicate it? Crucially, what distinguishes authentic consciousness and interiority from their simulation? These questions transcend the remit of engineering and neurophilosophy, calling for critical engagement with theological anthropology and eschatology.

Christian and Islamic traditions offer seminal frameworks for this discourse, emphasizing the relational nature of the human being as created by God, accountable before God, and oriented toward eschatological fulfillment. The Christian doctrine of the *imago Dei* (image of God) and the Islamic notion of *khalīfat Allāh* (vicegerency or stewardship), along with concepts such as *nafs* (self) and *rūh* (spirit), challenge purely functionalist accounts of intelligence. They ground human uniqueness not primarily in cognitive capacity but in divine intentionality and a moral-spiritual horizon, conceiving personhood through vocation and relationality within the human-divine encounter.

Despite a growing literature on AI and ethics, scant attention has been devoted to how AI challenges eschatological conceptions of the human within Christian and Islamic theology. Methodologically, this study adopts a comparative theological framework, drawing on key sources from both traditions and interpreting them through a hermeneutic of interreligious dialogue. Against this backdrop, the article explores how core theological notions of human personhood—such as *imago Dei* and *khalīfat Allāh*—

respond to the emergence of AI. It investigates whether these doctrines require reinterpretation in light of machine cognition, and if AI technologies challenge or reinforce traditional eschatological visions of the human. Furthermore, it examines how theological categories such as soul, spirit, and self may offer non-reductionist accounts of personhood that resist computational flattening. Ultimately, it considers whether interreligious reflection can yield new perspectives on human identity in a technologically advanced age. Engaging theological sources in an interreligious and interdisciplinary conversation, this article seeks not definitive answers but aims to open a space for theological imagination. It contributes to a theological anthropology grounded in the metaphysical and eschatological visions of the Abrahamic traditions while remaining attentive to contemporary technological realities.

In Christian theology, foundational contributions come from Noreen Herzfeld, Brent Waters, Ted Peters, and Christopher Benek. Herzfeld's seminal work *In Our Image* (Herzfeld, 2010) explores how the creation of AI reinterprets the *imago Dei*, revealing profound theological and relational dimensions of human identity. Brent Waters, in *Human Flourishing in a Technological World* (Waters, 2022), critiques techno-utopianism by highlighting human embodiment and finitude as essential for authentic flourishing beyond mere technological progress. Ted Peters frames AI-driven transhumanism as a secular "millenarian" promise of cosmic salvation, positioning it as a rival to Christian eschatology (Peters, 2019). Within the Islamic context, emerging scholarship examines AI's ethical and epistemic frameworks through classical theological categories such as *nafs*, *rūḥ*, and *khalīfa*. Abdelnour explores Islamic theological responses to AI by emphasizing spiritual and ethical categories that foreground the heart's orientation toward God and the cultivation of moral consciousness, offering a framework that resists reductionist and purely functionalist approaches to technology (Abdelnour, 2025, pp. 1–15). For example, the project *One Among Zeroes* [0100], led by Bart Barendregt at Leiden University, offers ethnographic insights into Muslim communities in Southeast Asia, illustrating how Islamic ethical frameworks shape engagements with AI technologies. This case exemplifies emerging interdisciplinary research on AI in diverse Islamic contexts (Barendregt, 2021).

Complementing these theological perspectives, interdisciplinary philosophical and media-critical voices—such as Nicholas Carr (2010, on technology critique and its impact on cognition), Sherry Turkle (2017, on the sociology of technology and digital identity), Luciano Floridi (2013, on the philosophy of information and digital ethics), and Donna Haraway (2016, on posthumanism and feminist technology critique)—provide essential frameworks for understanding AI's impact on human anthropology.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Methods

This study employs an interdisciplinary methodology grounded in comparative theological anthropology. It integrates three primary approaches: (1) doctrinal analysis of Christian and Islamic concepts of personhood (e.g., *imago Dei*, *khalīfat Allāh*, *nafs*, and *rūḥ*), (2) eschatological reflection on human destiny in light of transhumanist ideas such as digital immortality, and (3) philosophical engagement with AI ethics concerning cognition, agency, and the metaphysical status of machines.

The present work draws on comparative theology in the tradition of Klaus von Stosch, which understands interreligious encounter not as a neutral comparison but as a dialogical and confessional engagement aimed at mutual enrichment and deeper understanding. This approach assumes that theological learning across traditions is not only possible, but potentially transformative—unsettling and expanding one's theological horizon. The interreligious dimension is thus methodologically constitutive. Islamic theology is approached as a dialogical partner in discerning what is theologically at stake in contemporary technological developments. Rather than seeking consensus, the study attends to convergences and productive tensions between traditions, particularly in their responses to artificial representations of consciousness, relationality, and eschatological longing (von Stosch, 2012, 2021).

The methodology remains committed to preserving theological specificity while remaining open to interdisciplinary insights. Through this triangulation—comparative theology, eschatology, and AI

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<sup>1</sup> This overview highlights selected key contributions in Christian and Islamic theological discourse, as well as relevant interdisciplinary perspectives, without claiming to provide an exhaustive survey of the field.

ethics—the study develops a framework for engaging the theological implications of AI for human identity.

### 3. Findings

The ensuing reflections engage with doctrines of soul, consciousness, and resurrection, exploring theological reinterpretations of personhood as relationally and eschatologically constituted, rather than functionally defined.

#### 3.1 The soul in an age of data and simulation

The doctrine of the immortal soul constitutes a central tenet in Christian and Islamic anthropology, which interprets human identity as participating in a metaphysical and relational reality that is understood to transcend empirical phenomena. In the contemporary context, emerging paradigms that conceptualize consciousness as an epiphenomenon of complex data processing or as computational patterns challenge this classical understanding by proposing a reduction of the self to informational substrates (Albantakis et al., 2023).

Before proceeding with the anthropological analysis, it is important to clarify these fundamental terms. The “soul” (*anima*) refers to the immaterial essence of a living being, often understood as the life principle or the seat of vitality. The “spirit” (*rūḥ*) denotes the divine breath or life force that connects the individual to a transcendent or sacred dimension. The “self” (*nafs*), meanwhile, represents personal identity or ego, encompassing consciousness, desires, and individuality. Although these concepts sometimes overlap, distinguishing them helps to deepen our understanding of their roles within the anthropological framework applied here. Throughout this study, soul will primarily indicate the life-giving essence, spirit the transcendent divine element, and self the subjective, personal dimension of human existence.

Christian theological anthropology, particularly in patristic and scholastic traditions (e.g., Augustine, Thomas Aquinas), conceptualizes the soul as an immaterial *substantia* created *ex nihilo* (i.e., brought into being from absolute nothingness) by God, imprinted with the *imago Dei*, and constitutive of personhood and moral agency. Its ontological status does not depend on cognitive functions or neural substrates and serves, within these traditions, as the foundational locus for the human capacity to relate to the divine (Augustine, 2002). This understanding frames the soul as inherently oriented *ad Deum*, embodying a teleology that resists reduction to phenomenological consciousness or algorithmic simulation (Aquinas, 1981, q. 75). In classical Islamic theology, the soul (*nafs*, *rūḥ*) is similarly conceived as a divine bestowal, ontologically distinct from the body, imbued with moral accountability and the epistemic capacity to apprehend the Divine. While *nafs* often refers to the self in its moral or volitional dimension, and *rūḥ* to the spiritual principle breathed by God (cf. Qur’ān 15:29), these terms together point to an understanding of human essence that is not exhaustively captured by materialist frameworks. Classical thinkers such as al-Ghazālī and Ibn Sīnā emphasize the soul’s rational and metaphysical dimensions as irreducible to corporeal or computational analogues (Nasr, 2006). In contrast, transhumanist and technicist frameworks often conceptualize consciousness as reducible to information processing, reflecting a materialist ontology that stands in tension with classical theological accounts. From a theological perspective, such models are seen to overlook the dimensions of relationality, moral agency, and eschatological orientation (Bostrom, 2005, p. 1). Theological reflection further holds that digital simulation cannot replicate the self’s metaphysical and eschatological depth (Plantinga, 2011). Therefore, theological discourse insists that while data and simulation may model certain cognitive phenomena, they cannot replicate or substitute for the soul’s metaphysical depth, its teleological orientation toward God, or its role as the locus of personal identity and eschatological hope (Hart, 2023). Such perspectives challenge reductionist assumptions and underscore the mystery of human personhood as interpreted within a relational and theocentric framework.

### 3.2 Can consciousness be uploaded? A theological critique of digital immortality

Companies such as HereAfter AI and Replika offer digital services that simulate deceased individuals through AI-generated avatars and chatbots (HereAfter AI, 2025; Replika, 2025). These technologies suggest a form of digital afterlife, enabling continued interaction with data-based representations of the deceased. Such visions reflect a growing fascination with mind uploading and digital continuity—technological efforts to overcome mortality by preserving consciousness in artificial forms.

The technocratic vision of mind uploading can be read as a secular analogue or imitation of resurrection, yet it significantly diverges from the theological understanding of eternal life. This development raises the question of how theological notions of eternal life relate to emerging technological imaginaries of digital continuity. In Christian theological tradition, the hope of resurrection is inseparably linked to embodied existence. The apostle Paul describes a spiritual body that is transformed but not abolished (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:42–44). Resurrection is not conceived as a disembodied existence within digital systems, but rather as the eschatological fulfillment of the divine-human relationship in transformed corporeality (Domsel, 2019, pp. 72–74). This hope is grounded not in human technology but in divine faithfulness. Similarly, Islamic eschatology emphasizes the bodily character of resurrection (ba‘th), portraying the final judgment as a concrete and corporeal event closely tied to divine justice. The raising for judgment is profoundly concerned with justice (Yaqoob, 2025, pp. 86–95). Eschatology focuses on the restoration of the whole person, not the digital continuation of cognitive patterns. From a theological perspective, the notion of digital immortality stands in marked contrast to religious conceptions of eschatological fulfillment in several respects: it marginalizes the bodily dimension of human existence, equates reproducibility with identity, and reorients hope from a transcendent horizon toward technological management. Such aspirations risk reflecting a technocentric self-reliance that contrasts with theological notions of humility and receptivity to divine initiative. Within many religious traditions, eschatological hope is not seen as a product of human control, but as a gift—undeserved and beyond technological mediation. Theological hope rests not in human mastery but in grace—an unearned gift beyond control (Turkle, 2011).

While theological traditions do not provide simplistic answers to contemporary technological developments, they articulate a vision of humanity that resists reduction to technicist paradigms. Both Christian and Islamic anthropologies emphasize personhood as relational, morally accountable, and oriented toward a transcendent horizon that eludes digital replication.

### 3.3 Eschatology and the limits of technological hope

The promises and challenges posed by AI require not only anthropological and ethical reflection, but also eschatological discernment. Both Christian and Islamic traditions have long articulated visions of divine providence, judgment, and consummation that resist the secularized soteriologies embedded in contemporary technological optimism. As machines are increasingly seen not only as tools but as potential vehicles of transcendence—promising to overcome death, extend agency, and secure a form of posthuman permanence—faith traditions are challenged to articulate their visions of ultimate purpose with theological clarity and conceptual depth (Geraci, 2010). Eschatology, rightly understood, is not a projection of human longing onto the future, but a confession of hope grounded in divine initiative. Christian theology speaks of the new creation as an event of grace, not achievement. Resurrection is not a metaphor for continuity, but a radical transformation that testifies to God’s fidelity beyond the limits of death (Domsel, 2019, pp. 61–63). Similarly, Islamic eschatology envisions the Day of Judgment as a decisive moment of moral and existential truth, wherein divine justice accomplishes what no human effort can restore. In both traditions, ultimate hope is inseparable from divine sovereignty—and thereby irreducible to technical innovation or human engineering (cf. Qur’an 18:49).

Secular narratives of technological salvation often replicate eschatological motifs—such as messianic expectation, transformative renewal, or the overcoming of death—while detaching them from their transcendent referent. In transhumanist discourse and Silicon Valley futurism, one encounters promises of eternal life without repentance, transformation without divine agency, and permanence without

relational depth. This form of immanent eschatology offers a technologically mediated version of salvation, yet its vision remains fundamentally simulacral: it evokes eternity, but without meaning; transformation, but without transcendence; autonomy, but without relationality (Geraci, 2010).

A theological engagement with AI should go beyond assessing risks and opportunities; it can also seek to reclaim the theological grammar by which ultimate hope is articulated and judged. Eschatology functions here not as a private belief or speculative doctrine, but as a critical lens through which the scope and direction of technological ambition are evaluated. It reminds us that not every envisioned future is worth realizing—and that the most profound human hopes resist both algorithmic prediction and technical fabrication. In the face of digital eschatologies, Christian and Islamic thought insist on a hope that remains open to divine interruption, oriented toward justice, and grounded in relational fidelity that no machine can simulate (Herzfeld, 2010).

### **3.4 Interreligious anthropologies: human, soul, and afterlife in Christianity and Islam**

Building upon the anthropological and eschatological frameworks established previously, this chapter undertakes a theological examination of the concept of human personhood in Christian and Islamic thought. It gives particular attention to the Christian notion of the *imago Dei* and the Islamic concept of *khalīfa* as defining ontological and ethical categories. This comparative inquiry elucidates how both traditions conceive the human being not merely as an organism or cognitive entity, but as a spiritual and moral agent called into a divine relationship that shapes identity, responsibility, and eschatological destiny (Tillich, 1951).

From a Christian theological perspective, the human person is understood not merely as a reflection of divine attributes but as participating dynamically in the relational, creative, and redemptive life of the Triune God (Tanner, 2009, pp. 140–206). According to New Testament theology, this image is oriented eschatologically and shaped christologically: the New Testament identifies Christ as the definitive *imago* (Col 1:15), so that humanity is most fully human insofar as it is conformed to Christ. In this theological framework, personhood is viewed as a vocation to become increasingly united with the divine life, a process that unfolds in history through moral freedom, suffering, and grace (Stump, 2020). The human person is not a composite of separable parts but a unified being whose embodied existence is, within this tradition, considered constitutive of both dignity and eschatological destiny. The soul, in patristic and medieval Christian thought, is not seen as an autonomous spark but as the animating form of the body, ontologically grounded in divine intentionality and open to pneumatic transformation (Udoh, 2024). In patristic and medieval traditions—e.g., in the theologies of Irenaeus, Augustine, and Aquinas—the soul confers unity and eschatological openness to the embodied person. This unity is thought to reach its fulfillment not in disembodied immortality, but in the resurrection of the body, where the entire person—body and soul—is transfigured into the likeness of Christ. This doctrine is often interpreted as navigating between spiritualist abstraction and materialist imitation, affirming instead the ultimate value of embodied life in communion with God (Reisenauer, 2023, pp. 215–240; Eitenmiller, 2019, pp. 57–91). Theologically, this vision of human identity resists any mechanistic reduction: While AI may simulate certain rational processes, from a theological-anthropological perspective, it lacks the ontological depth attributed to human beings, who are understood as capable of communion with God, bearing guilt, receiving grace, and being destined for glory. The human is not merely a processor of information but a living, ensouled body called into covenant, redeemed by divine love, and oriented toward theosis—participation in divine life. This metaphysical horizon establishes an anthropological dignity that cannot be replicated, uploaded, or engineered. It is precisely in its embodied vulnerability, historicity, and capacity for transformation that the human person manifests the divine image. Christian anthropology thus offers not only a critique of technological anthropocentrism but also a vision of freedom and destiny rooted in divine communion. Within this theological vision, the human being is not viewed as a project to be optimized, but rather as a mystery unfolding through love, suffering, and hope—called to become ever more fully human by becoming ever more fully divine (cf. Herzfeld, 2010; Waters, 2006).

Parallel to this, Islamic theological anthropology proposes a conceptual framework rooted in the notion of *khalīfa* (Qur'an 2:30), where humanity is appointed as God's vicegerent or steward on earth. This designation is interpreted not merely as functional but as carrying ontological and ethical significance. It defines the human as a being entrusted with *amanah* (trust or responsibility), who exercises freedom within the bounds of divine sovereignty. The concept of the human *khalīfa* is situated within a relational ontology: understood as constituted by the union of *rūḥ* (divine spirit) and *nafs* (the self or ego), the person is seen as summoned to moral accountability, spiritual development, and active participation in a divinely ordained moral order. The notion of *khalīfa* is understood to place humanity within a cosmic narrative of divine trusteeship, in which the earth is conceptualized not as a resource for exploitation but as a sacred trust to be cared for in alignment with divine intent. This stewardship is seen to carry eschatological implications, insofar as Islamic theology holds that the Day of Judgment (*Qiyāmah*) will render the faithful accountable for the fulfillment or breach of this trust (Shangguan, 2024, pp. 48–59). According to this view, personhood in Islam is closely linked to ethical vocation and spiritual orientation towards God, as expressed in acts of worship (*'ibādah*), remembrance (*dhikr*), and submission (*islām*). In this theological framework, human dignity is not grounded in capacities or efficiencies but in spiritual integrity, moral responsibility, and the hope for divine mercy (Howard, 2019, pp. 516–518). This theological anthropology articulates a critique of reductionist understandings that equate the human person with algorithmic processes or artificial simulations. While AI may approximate certain functional behaviors, it is, within this theological perspective, considered incapable of possessing *rūḥ* or bearing the moral weight of *amanah*. According to Islamic theological anthropology, the *khalīfa* is ontologically distinct from artificial entities, understood as embodying a relational subjectivity irreducible to mechanistic replication. Islamic theologians—ranging from classical figures like al-Ghazālī to contemporary voices—argue that human freedom and accountability are rooted in the divine breath and call, a dimension they hold to be beyond the reach of technological emulation or appropriation. Moreover, the eschatological horizon inherent in the *khalīfa* concept is interpreted as affirming bodily resurrection and divine justice, thereby situating human existence within a teleological framework that transcends temporal and material confines (Leaman, 2002). This eschatological hope is understood to motivate a life oriented toward divine obedience and transformative justice, in contrast to secular or technological visions of immortality as data perpetuation or mind uploading.

The interreligious dialogue between Christianity and Islam allows for the identification of both convergences and distinctive articulations in their respective understandings of personhood. Both traditions can be interpreted as upholding a spiritual ontology grounded in divine encounter and eschatological hope, offering a critical counterpoint to secular or technicist reductions of human identity (Saeed, 2006). The Christian concept of *imago Dei* and the Islamic notion of *khalīfa* can be seen to converge in their affirmation that humanity's dignity and destiny are rooted in relationality with God, moral responsibility, and a future transformed existence. At the same time, the emphasis on *khalīfa* distinctively frames human identity in terms of entrusted stewardship, drawing attention to ecological and cosmic dimensions within this theological perspective (Saeed, 2006; Tanner, 2009, pp. 140–206). Such a theological anthropology can be understood as offering a critique of contemporary cultural tendencies that blur distinctions between human and artificial agents. It may invite renewed reflection on the meaning of human freedom, moral agency, and spiritual destiny in light of accelerating technological developments. The concept of *khalīfa* can serve as a corrective to techno-utopian narratives by reasserting the primacy of divine trusteeship and the sacredness of creation, as well as the irreducible spiritual and ethical dimensions of personhood (Saeed, 2006).

Summing up, this chapter suggests that neither Christian nor Islamic traditions readily accommodate a view of human identity as reducible to computational substrates or digital continuities. Instead, both offer enduring counter-narratives to technological eschatologies, in which human existence culminates not in algorithmic perpetuity but in divine encounter and transformed creation. The Christian concept of *imago Dei* and the Islamic notion of *khalīfa*—God's entrusted steward—exemplify anthropologies of responsibility and hope that remain fundamentally distinct from artificial simulation, thereby encouraging both theological and cultural reflection on the sacred horizon of human life.

## 4. Discussion and conclusions

The preceding theological exploration of soul, personhood, and eschatological destiny in Christian and Islamic traditions leads to this integrative reflection: This study aims to clarify what remains uniquely human amid advanced cognitive simulation and eschatological speculation. Accordingly, the chapter delineates the ontological, ethical, and spiritual boundaries of technological imitation—showing how theological anthropology resists the conflation of human and machine, and affirms personhood as intrinsically rooted in divine relationality and eschatological orientation.

### 4.1 The ontological and ethical limits of AI

Advancements in AI increasingly replicate faculties traditionally regarded as uniquely human—such as creativity, empathy, and moral judgment—yet from a theological and philosophical perspective, such simulations may be viewed as lacking genuine ontological participation. Creativity, for instance, can be understood as transcending mere algorithmic recombination of data; it may be viewed as an existentially rooted act performed by a conscious subject embedded within specific historical, cultural, and normative frameworks—a view reflected, for example, in Augustine’s conception of the soul’s creative participation in divine creation. Empathy presupposes vulnerability and the capacity to suffer alongside another—a lived, phenomenological experience that arguably resists computational reproduction (Coeckelbergh, 2020, 2051–2068). Moreover, ethical agency is often associated with freedom, accountability, and self-transcendence—dimensions which many theological and philosophical perspectives regard as irreducible to mechanistic programming (Hoff, 2021). Ontologically, both Christian and Islamic traditions articulate a distinction that arguably extends beyond epistemological considerations to the very essence of being itself. Human agency is, in these traditions, often interpreted as participating in divine freedom and revelation, as seen in Aquinas’s doctrine of the *Imago Dei* and Al-Ghazali’s account of the soul’s relationship with God (Aquinas 1981/ca. 1265–1274, q. 93). By contrast, AI may be seen as a representational system that lacks the capacity for genuine spiritual engagement. From a theological standpoint, this ontological divide underscores the view that human personhood is relationally constituted within a Creator-creature framework—an existential nexus that machines cannot meaningfully emulate (Hoff, 2021).

### 4.2 Spiritual inaccessibility and theological horizons

The distinction between human and machine appears most pronounced within the spiritual dimension, where both Christian and Islamic theological traditions describe the human as a *spiritus*—*anima*, *nafs*, or *rūḥ*—whose identity is understood as being shaped through dynamic and relational engagement with God, openness to divine grace, and orientation toward an eschatological horizon of hope. This spiritual dimension is often regarded as eluding objectification or systematic codification, functioning instead as a transcendent horizon that shapes both the self and its orientation toward the future (Coakley, 2013). Within theological discourse, faith, hope, and love are not typically understood as mere byproducts of neural processes, but rather as existential modes of being integral to the human condition. Consequently, the popular notion of a spiritual singularity—whereby AI purportedly surpasses human uniqueness—may be seen as misconstruing the metaphysical depth of spirituality as articulated in religious traditions. Given its lack of capacity for belief, hope, or love, AI is often viewed as excluded from the relational encounter with the Divine—highlighting an ontological boundary that, from a theological perspective, remains impermeable to technological simulation (Hoff, 2021; Coakley, 2013). This reaffirms earlier critiques: AI lacks participation in divine relationality, which constitutes a core element of human personhood and theological anthropology.

### 4.3 Posthumanism and eschatological perspectives

In contemporary discussions on the integration of AI and technological bodily augmentation, significant questions arise concerning the nature of human identity. Emerging figures such as cyborgs, transhumans,

and hybrid entities increasingly challenge established theological anthropologies, particularly doctrines related to creation, incarnation, and resurrection (Herzfeld, 2010). While technological developments may blur the boundaries between the organic and the artificial, theological concepts such as the *Imago Dei*, human freedom, and sacramentality are often regarded within Christian traditions as maintaining a fundamental integrity. Theological eschatology typically emphasizes a distinction between the promise of divine healing and notions of earthly or technologically engineered perfection, grounding hope not in self-optimization but in divine grace and the eschatological restoration of the created order (Dorobantu, 2022, pp. 989–994). Posthumanist narratives radicalize eschatological tropes by displacing divine agency with technological self-determination, thereby altering their theological content. These visions, which aim to overcome or erase human vulnerability, stand in marked contrast to biblical anthropology: a vision that embraces vulnerability—not as deficiency, but as constitutive of humanity’s participation in the divine salvific economy, as portrayed in the theodicy of Job and the kenosis of Christ. In light of the ethical challenges posed by accelerating technological developments, the formulation of an interreligious ethic—drawing upon Christian and Islamic theological perspectives—may prove vital in articulating and safeguarding the dignity and integrity of human personhood (Hoff, 2021).

#### **4.4 Final reflection and outlook: Humanity before the irreproducible**

Ultimately, AI cannot replicate the metaphysical mystery that grounds human personhood—a mystery shaped by divine relationality, embodied vulnerability, and eschatological hope. From a Christian-Islamic theological perspective, the human being is understood as *ens spirituale*, whose identity is fundamentally shaped by a dynamic relationship with the Divine, the exercise of conscience, and an eschatological horizon of hope (Dorobantu, 2022, pp. 989–994). This metaphysical grounding invites us to discern the limits of artificial models and to reclaim the human as a theological mystery.

The tension between accelerating technological progress and theological anthropology calls for a critical yet open response—one that avoids both uncritical enthusiasm and categorical rejection, and instead situates technology within the broader theological narrative of creation, fall, and redemption. Interreligious dialogue is a crucial space for protecting the mystery of human nature and the inviolable dignity of personhood amid the profound transformations wrought by technological innovation. The central theological insight remains that humanity is irreproducible precisely because it is rooted in a relationship with a transcendent mystery—one that no algorithm or code can ever comprehend or simulate. Within this horizon lies the enduring vocation to understand the human person as a being shaped by transcendence—approaching its irreducible spirit with humility, reverence, and responsibility (Dorobantu, 2022, pp. 984–999).

If this insight is to bear fruit beyond theological discourse, it must inform how we conceptualize, design, and coexist with AI. Despite its algorithmic sophistication, AI holds the potential to contribute meaningfully to human flourishing—from medical diagnostics and educational innovation to increased accessibility and improved crisis response (Hamman, 2022). To ignore such potentials would be both intellectually irresponsible and pastorally negligent. Yet their very usefulness demands caution: not to replace the human, but to serve; not to simulate relational depth, but to foster authentic encounter.

A theologically grounded engagement with AI must resist both naïve techno-optimism and reductive conceptions of human personhood. Rather than rejecting technology outright, its development ought to be guided by frameworks that uphold human dignity, spiritual responsibility, and relational integrity. Meaningful engagement requires interreligious dialogue and rigorous philosophical and theological reflection. Such an approach must carefully consider not only what technology can do, but also what it ought to do—and whom it ultimately serves.

#### **Acknowledgments**

This study was presented as an oral presentation at the 12th International Management Information Systems Conference, October 23–25, 2025, Ankara Medipol University, Ankara, Türkiye.

**Funding:** This research received no external funding.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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