

The Theological Foundations of Resistance in Imam Khomeini's Thought

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Abstract

Imam Khomeini made significant strides in utilizing theological foundations and, through his interpretations, derived notable and decisive insights. His personality is unparalleled in the contemporary era, embodying a multifaceted human being with expertise in fields such as jurisprudence, principles of jurisprudence, theology, mysticism, politics, and governance. These various dimensions of his thought and character are intricately intertwined, making it challenging for researchers to isolate any single feature. However, to understand Imam Khomeini's ideas, one must delve into the foundational principles behind his thoughts. For many years, the concept of resistance has taken on a distinctive and special form, its essence and authenticity deeply rooted in Shiite theological principles. The innovator, interpreter, propagator, and promoter of this concept is none other than Imam Khomeini. His thought, based on Shiite theological foundations, has followers from every corner of the world-east and west, from every religion and sect, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, and from all races, genders, and countries. Imam Khomeini's philosophy of resistance is derived from Shiite teachings, grounded in the Quran, the Sunnah, and reason. This philosophy, which is continuously evolving in the form of opposition to arrogance and the fight against polytheism, infidelity, and atheism, is based on Quranic teachings and the theological thought of Twelver Shiism. It transcends time, place, and geography and is never subject to cessation. Therefore, this research aims to elucidate the theological foundations of the theory of resistance in Imam Khomeini's thought and to derive the results of his theological perspective. It will answer the question: What are the theological foundations of the deep and profound concept of resistance in

Cite this article: Tayari Dehaghani, M.J., Navvab, S.A. & Namazizadeh, M.S. (2025). The Theological Foundations of Resistance in Imam Khomeini's Thought. *Journal of Islamic Political Studies*, 7(1), pp. 189-210. <https://doi.org/10.22081/jips.2025.78116>

Received: 2024/05/13 ; **Received in revised form:** 2024/07/01 ; **Accepted:** 2024/09/04 ; **Published online:** 2025/04/10
© The Author(s). **Article type:** Research Article **Publisher:** Islamic Sciences and Culture Academy



<http://jips.isca.ac.ir/>

Imam Khomeini's view? This article is based on archival research and employs historical, interpretive, comparative, and content analysis methods. In this study, various subjects from Imam Khomeini's viewpoint are addressed, including: divine monotheism, practical monotheism (including sincerity and piety), divine justice (including fate and free will), prophethood and the prophets, leadership and the concept of the Guardianship of the Jurist (*Wilāyat-i Faqīh*), the principle of governance, the belief in Mahdism and the reappearance of the Imam of the time and waiting for his return, resurrection, martyrdom, the command to enjoin good and forbid evil, unity, steadfastness, opposition to arrogance, following the guidance of a single religious leader, success in fulfilling duties, and both faithful and non-faithful resistance. Ultimately, the outcome of this research highlights the unique perspective of Twelver Shiism in confronting oppression and the oppressors, underscoring the necessity of resistance and perseverance against them, even to the point of voluntary death, which is martyrdom. Imam Khomeini revived this outlook in the contemporary world and added a crucial element: the resistance to oppression itself, positioning it alongside the concepts of the oppressor and the oppressed, or the dominant and the dominated. This perspective was then gifted to the world today. The practical outcome of Imam Khomeini's resistance philosophy is the global struggle against imperialism, which today is manifested in the resistance front's battle against the forces of evil, namely the United States and Israel, as we witness in the ongoing global resistance movement.

Keywords

Resistance, Imami theology, theological foundations, Imam Khomeini.

Introduction

Islamic theology (*‘Ilm al-Kalām*) is a discipline concerned with the derivation, organization, and explanation of religious doctrines and concepts. Drawing on various forms of argumentation—including demonstration, dialectic, rhetoric, and others—it establishes and justifies theological propositions and responds to objections and doubts raised by opponents of religion” (Khosropanah, 2004, p. 6). The concept of “resistance,” however, is a broader notion that has been employed across history by various schools of thought and religious traditions. Fundamentally, wherever there has been “power,” there has also emerged “resistance” in response. Accordingly, an examination of the historical trajectory of resistance in the past century reveals numerous prominent figures and thinkers—particularly among the ideologues of the principlist movement and Islamic awakening in the twentieth century. One such figure is Sayyid Qutb, whose extensive writings and profound influence give him a distinctive status (Seyed, 2008, p. 17). Attention can also be given to the Mu‘tazilite and neo-Mu‘tazilite movements. Further examples include Sayyid Jamal al-Din Asadabadi, known for advocating the unity of Islamic states and rapprochement between Sunni and Shi‘i schools of thought, and Ayatollah Sayyid Muhammad Hasan Mirza Shirazi, renowned for his anti-colonial ruling in the Tobacco Protest. The anti-imperialist Jangal Movement led by Mirza Kuchek Khan is another notable and well-documented instance of resistance. Equally commendable is the stance of Ayatollah Sayyid Hasan Modarres, who opposed both domestic despotism and foreign colonialism. This trajectory continues with the nationalization of Iran’s oil industry, a movement led by Dr. Mohammad Mosaddegh and Ayatollah Kashani. Among these figures, however, Imam Khomeini stands out as a founder of the modern resistance movement in the region and beyond. He not only offered a unique theological definition of resistance but also translated it into practice.

Imam Khomeini took a significant step forward in employing theological principles, drawing upon them in a conscious and deliberate manner, rather than in a hidden or unconscious way. His use of these foundations is especially evident in the field of political jurisprudence. His jurisprudential efforts in the political domain provide a valuable foundation for further studies—studies that, if pursued, can offer profound insights and shed light on the often-overlooked dimensions of theological foundations (Moballeghi, 2000, p. 33).

The foundations of anti-arrogance politics in Imam Khomeini’s thought are rooted in the Qur’an (Naderi, 2015, p. 128). In his political philosophy, the logic of resistance is based on the continual and perpetual nature of struggle—

particularly in the form of opposition to global arrogance, polytheism, disbelief, and atheism—grounded in Qur'anic teachings and Twelver Shi'i theological thought. This struggle is not confined to a specific time or place but is considered eternal and universal. What further underscores the importance and necessity of this research is the role of Imam Khomeini in the contemporary era—as one of the most prominent scholars of Twelver Shi'ism and as a leading theorist of the concept of resistance. A proper understanding of the significance of Imam Khomeini's resistance thought, especially when interpreted through the lens of Imami (Twelver Shiite) theological teachings, adds further depth to this study. Accordingly, the aim of this research is to examine and articulate the theological foundations of the theory of resistance in Imam Khomeini's thought. In addition, the study seeks to analyze the conceptual model of resistance strategy derived from his ideas.

1. Research Background

Numerous studies have been conducted on the topics of Islamic theology, resistance, and Imam Khomeini. Among them, some works—both general and specific—are closely related to the subject of this research. Notable among these is *Resistance in Islam* by Asghar Eftekhari (2020), as well as *The Thought of Resistance* by Ali Mahdian (2020). Mohammad Mehdi Asefi and Ramazan Ali Rafiei (2019), in their book, engage in a comparative study of the jurisprudence of resistance. In addition to theorizing within the framework of Shiite jurisprudence and explaining the views of Shi'i jurists on the topic, they also discuss the perspectives of prominent jurists from the four major Sunni schools of law—Maliki, Hanafi, Hanbali, and Shafi'i. Similarly, Shaykh Sabah Khaqani (2018), in his book *Culture of Resistance and Jihad in Shiite Thought*, explores various types of jihad, the conditions under which it becomes obligatory for Muslims, and the sincerity required of a mujahid. Shamami (2018), in *The Conflict of Ideas*, presents a comparative analysis of different approaches to resistance. Other related works include *A Theoretical Review of the Doctrine of Resistance in the Foreign Policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran* by Ghaffar Zarei (2019), and *Methods of Resistance in the Quran* by Alireza Jafari (1998), which outlines various forms of resistance as reflected in the Quran.

Among the specific prior works related to this research is the book by Seyed Javad Hashemi Fasharaki and Mehdi Khan-Ahmadi (2020), titled *The Strategy of Resistance in the Thought of Imam Khomeini and an Overview of the Hezbollah Movement*. This study offers a comparative analysis of Imam

Khomeini's statements and letters concerning the strategy of resistance, and examines the impact of his thought on Islamic movements—particularly the Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement. The book explains how the regional developments following the Islamic Revolution and the proposed strategy are rooted in Imam Khomeini's ideas, clarifying the influence of his thinking on contemporary Islamic movements. In a similar vein, Mohammad Ali Mohammadi (2020), in his study titled *Islamic Resistance from the Perspective of Imam Khomeini*, argues that after the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the attitude of Muslim nations toward the concept of resistance underwent a significant transformation. The effectiveness and necessity of standing firm against tyranny became evident to them, and consequently, various resistance movements were formed, inspired by Imam Khomeini's method of confronting global arrogance (Hollander & Einwohner, 2004, p. 594). In this study, resistance is examined exclusively through the prism of Imam Khomeini's theological foundations. The analysis focuses on the key theological indices of monotheism, divine providence, divine decree and predestination, prophethood, imamate, and resurrection. In addition, the two ethical indices most closely linked to these theological concepts—sincerity (*ikhhlās*) and piety (*taqwā*), both of which Imam Khomeini emphasized—are examined. By exploring how each of these variables relates to the concept of resistance in Imam Khomeini's thought, this study adopts an approach that diverges from previous research and offers a fresh, analytic perspective.

2. Conceptual Foundations

Muqāwama (resistance): The term *muqāwama* is derived from the Arabic root (*qāwama*), which means “to stand” or “to stand upright.” The terms *qiyām* (standing) and *qu‘ūd* (sitting) represent opposite physical states (Zabīdī, 1995, p. 498). In its broader sense, resistance implies perseverance and steadfastness in adhering to one's principles. It entails a form of confrontation and active effort aimed at influencing, changing, or rejecting the behavior of the opposing side (Mohabbati, 2022, p. 108). In Quranic terminology and the cultural context of the Qur'an, resistance refers to a state of steadfastness in which a person takes action to accomplish goals or fulfill certain tasks. This involves creating the necessary conditions, removing obstacles, and standing firm in the face of pressure. Terms such as *qiyām*, *istiqāma*, and *muqāwama* in Arabic—and equivalents such as standing firm or steadfastness in English—are often used metaphorically to describe this particular state. Thus, when we say someone “resisted” or “remained steadfast” and managed to stand firm against

someone else, it does not necessarily mean that they physically stood up. Rather, it signifies that they held firmly to their beliefs and objectives, did not give in, created the conditions necessary for their realization, fought against the obstacles, and endured external pressures (Zamakhsharī, 1979, p. 538).

With regard to steadfastness (*istiqāmah*), it may be noted that ‘Allāma Ṭabāṭabā’ī explains: after recounting the stories of the prophets and past nations, and revealing the secret of their success and victory—while also consoling and strengthening the Prophet’s resolve—the Quran gives one of its most important commands to the Noble Messenger. It states: “So remain steadfast as you have been commanded, and [also] those who have turned to God with you, and do not transgress. Indeed, He is Seeing of what you do” (Quran 11:112). It is worth noting that ‘Allāma Ṭabāṭabā’ī, throughout his exegesis, frequently refers to the concept of moderation (*i’tidāl*), using expressions such as “he was in the most balanced of states.” In any case, while *istiqāma* (steadfastness) implies resistance, its more precise meaning is the preservation of balance and the avoidance of deviation. Naturally, such moderation necessitates firmness and perseverance (Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 2011, vol. 17, p. 147).

Shī‘a (Shia or Shiite): Literally, the term Shī‘a has two meanings: first, agreement or alignment between two or more individuals on a matter; and second, the act of following—where one person or group follows another. In technical usage, Shī‘a refers to those Muslims who believe in the immediate and divinely designated leadership (imamate) of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib after the Prophet. They maintain that the Imamate is determined through explicit divine appointment (*naṣṣ shar‘ī*), and that the leadership of ‘Alī and the subsequent Imams is established through such scriptural designation. The use of the term Shī‘a to refer to the followers and supporters of ‘Alī was first introduced by the Prophet Muhammad himself. This is affirmed in multiple hadiths narrated from him. For instance, al-Suyūṭī reports from Jābir b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Anṣārī, Ibn ‘Abbās, and ‘Alī himself that the Prophet, in his interpretation of the verse “Indeed, those who believe and do righteous deeds—they are the best of creation” (Quran 98:7), pointed to ‘Alī and said: “You and your Shī‘a [followers] shall be the saved ones on the Day of Judgment” (Suyūṭī, 1984, p. 589). Throughout Shia history, various sects have emerged—many of which are now extinct and hold little relevance for contemporary discussion. The main surviving branches of Shī‘ism are: the Twelver Shia (*Ithnā ‘Ashariyya*), the Zaydī Shia, and the Ismaili Shia. However, the focus of this study is on the Twelver Shia (Mufid, 1993, p. 38).

3. Theoretical Foundations and Analysis Model

Imami Theology: Imami theology (*kalām*) is one of the Islamic theological schools concerned with affirming, explaining, and defending doctrinal teachings based on the method of the Prophet's household and their distinguished disciples. It emphasizes the use of both reason and transmitted sources in matters of belief. Imami theology stands in contrast to the theological schools of the Mu'tazilites, Ash'arites, and Māturīdīs, with its primary distinction lying in its approach to methodology and its particular doctrines concerning the Imamate. During the period of the Imams' presence, Shiite theology had a combined rational-transmitted character. After that, textualism (or scripturalism), rationalism, and philosophical reasoning became the dominant approaches adopted by Shi'i theologians in theological discussions. This shift reflects the historical development of Shi'i theology beginning with the Major Occultation. Al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, al-Shaykh al-Mufīd, and Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī were respectively among the key figures and pioneers of textualism, rationalism, and philosophical rationalism. Imami theology is considered one of the earliest theological schools in Islam; its discussions began immediately after the Prophet's passing, expanded during the caliphal era, and were systematically articulated in later centuries. In the fifth/eleventh century, it was structured by the emergence of Shaykh Mufid. In the seventh/thirteenth century, Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī introduced a transformative new method. From the eighth/fourteenth to the fourteenth/twentieth centuries, the discipline experienced a period of stagnation, during which it focused on commentaries and summaries. With the emergence of Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn Asadābādī, a new phase of reform and revitalization began (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 2011, vol. 9, p. 257).

4. Elucidating the Theological Foundations of Resistance from Imam Khomeini's Perspective

In outlining Imam Khomeini's views, one can broadly categorize them into three key principles: (1) faith, (2) sincerity (*ikhhlās*), and (3) piety (*taqwā*). Each of these, along with their various dimensions, is discussed in what follows.

It is important to note that sincerity, in essence, can be seen as a subset of the principle of monotheism. Imam Khomeini interprets monotheism in such a way that only God Almighty is the Creator and the true agent in existence, while we, in relation to Him, are nothing—indeed, absolute nothingness. Therefore, the reason sincerity and piety are addressed separately and given

special attention in his perspective lies in their central role within his monotheistic worldview.

4-1. Faith: To better understand the key concept of faith in Imam Khomeini's thought, it is helpful to examine certain core principles such as: (1) monotheism (or divine unity), (2) divine providence, (3) divine decree and destiny (qaḍā' wa-qadar), (4) prophethood, (5) imamate, and (6) resurrection. Exploring these elements provides a clearer foundation for explaining the theological basis of resistance from his perspective.

4-1-1. Monotheism: When we examine and analyze the speeches of Imam Khomeini, it becomes clear that a central theme runs through them all: unwavering faith and complete trust in God. His monotheistic worldview did not merely call people to worship one God and abandon false deities; rather, it emphasized the superiority of God Almighty in worship, as opposed to bowing before the tyrants (tāghūt) of the age. Just as Prophet Moses was sent by God to confront the tyranny and arrogance of his time, Imam Khomeini raised the banner of Islam in opposition to the oppressors of his own era. This deep monotheistic vision is evident in his statements such as "We are all from God and to Him we shall return," and during the war when he declared, "Khorramshahr was liberated by God." These expressions reveal his profound belief in divine unity—*lā ilāha illa-llāh*—as the foundation of his perspective. Emphasizing the role of faith and resistance in overcoming the enemy, Imam Khomeini repeatedly called for the preservation of faith as essential to the progress of the Islamic movement. He stated: "Just as it was faith in God that filled your hearts and guided you, and gave you the spirit of resistance—and it was God who struck fear into their hearts, and despite their satanic power, they were defeated—preserve this faith, so that the movement may continue forward" (Khomeini, 2011, vol. 9, p. 494).

4-1-2. Divine providence: The concept of divine providence (*mashī'at ilāhiyya*) is one of the significant topics in both theology and Qur'anic exegesis. The term "*mashī'a*" derives from the root "*shay'*" and the verb "*shā'a*," "*yashā'u*," which literally means will or desire. In technical usage, it refers to an inclination toward something to the extent that it leads to seeking it. Since this term is used by theologians in reference to both God and human beings, Rāghib al-Isfahānī interprets it with two different meanings: when referring to God, providence signifies the act of bringing something into existence (*ījād al-shay'*), while in relation to humans, it means to reach or attain something (Rāghib al-Isfahānī, 1996, p. 271). God's providence is one of the manifestations and effects of His divine power. The essence of power

lies in overcoming limitations; thus, the fewer and weaker the limitations, the more perfect the power (Muṣṭafawī, 1981, vol. 6, p. 158).

In his Persian translation and commentary on the Supplication of the Dawn (Du‘ā al-Saḥar), Imam Khomeini states: "The entire essence of beings, their desires, wills, effects, and movements are all aspects of the Divine Essence and its attributes, manifestations of His will and volition, radiations of His light, reflections of His presence, and expressions of His armies and degrees of power" (Khomeini, 2009c, p. 104). In his works, Imam Khomeini provides a precise theological exposition of divine providence, addressing topics such as the reality of divine will, its alignment with the Muḥammadan and ‘Alawī realities, and the manner in which one may attain proximity to it. Based on this theological foundation, the idea of resistance emerges as one of the central pillars of Imam Khomeini’s political thought. It is rooted in the practice of the Prophet Muhammad and the uprising of Imam al-Ḥusayn, and is characterized by elements such as opposition to oppression, resistance against global arrogance, a spirit of struggle (jihad), and the revival and reinforcement of religious identity. From the very outset of the Islamic Revolution until the present, this notion of resistance has served as a guiding force in confronting the harsh and aggressive conditions imposed by enemies (Ghorbani et al., 2022, p. 215).

4-1-3. Divine decree and destiny: Imam Khomeini holds that decree (qaḍā’) and destiny (qadar) have multiple levels, and the rulings and effects that follow from them differ according to these levels. The first level consists of the realities that, in the Divine Presence of Knowledge, are manifested as part of the Holiest Effusion (fayḍ aqdas) and determined through the appearance of Divine Names and Attributes. Following this, in the sublime quills and lofty tablets, these realities are actualized through active manifestation (tajallī fi ‘lī) and firmly established. At these levels, no change or alteration takes place. This is referred to as irrevocable decree (qaḍā’ ḥatm lā yubaddal)—that is, the immaterial realities that exist in the realms of the Divine Essences and the domain of knowledge, and that descend into the immaterial tablets and quills. After this stage, these realities appear in intermediate (barzakhī) and imaginal (mithālī) forms within other tablets and a lower realm, referred to as the realm of separate imagination (al-khayāl al-munfaṣil) or universal imagination (khayāl al-kull) (Khomeini, 2016, p. 63). According to the Illuminationist philosophers, this is known as the world of suspended images (muṭḥul mu‘allaqa), where changes and variations are not only possible but actually occur. Following this, the determinations and

measurements are administered by the angels assigned to the world of nature. In this tablet of destiny (*lawḥ al-qadar*), constant changes and continual transformations take place. This tablet itself is a fluid form, representing a reality that is transitional and gradual. In this level, realities are susceptible to intensity and weakness; movements can vary in speed, slowness, increase, and decrease. Nevertheless, the divine-orienting (*yalī Allāh*) aspect—the unseen aspect of these things, which relates back to the Truth (God), and which constitutes the manifestation of the expansive effusion (*fayḍ munbasit*) and the extended shadow (*ẓill mamdūd*), and is in fact the actual knowledge (*‘ilm fi ‘lī*) of the Divine—admits no change or alteration in any way (Khomeini, 2016, p. 63).

Imam Khomeini frequently stressed expressions such as “God’s hand is with you,” “the hand of God,” “God’s unseen hand,” and “divine favor” in his speeches. For example: “We are seeking our rightful due and we stand for the truth. God’s hand is with us, and it is higher than the hands of the Eastern and Western super-powers: ‘God’s hand is over their hands’ [Quran 48:10]” (Khomeini, 2011, vol. 4, p. 156). Another illustrative case is the liberation of Khorramshahr, which Imam Khomeini likened to a miracle (Khomeini, 2011, vol. 16, p. 270). He described this victory as a result of divine mercy, blessing, success, and favor (Khomeini, 2011, vol. 16, pp. 315-316). He added that similar events occurred in the early days of Islam, when God cast such fear and dread into the hearts of the enemies of Islam that, despite all their equipment, they surrendered before the resounding cry of “*Allahu akbar*” [God is greatest] from the Muslims (Khomeini, 2011, vol. 17, pp. 294-295).

4-1-4. Prophethood: Imam Khomeini explains the meaning and concept of prophethood as follows: “The meaning of prophethood—which corresponds to *risāla* or *nubuwwa* in Arabic—is that the All-Knowing God, either through angels or directly, appoints someone to establish a divine law (*sharia*), ordinances, and legislation among the people. Whoever is given this responsibility is a prophet—a messenger—whether or not angels descend upon him. And whoever does not hold this position and is not appointed to this task is not a prophet, even if he sees angels” (Khomeini, 2017, p. 126). For instance, if someone denies prophethood, or fails to uphold belief in it, or even accepts the Prophet but rejects his divinely appointed successor (*waṣī*), such a person has not remained steadfast in their belief. Likewise, belief in all the Pure Imams is necessary; denying any of them signifies a lack of consistency in one’s claim to faith. Imam ‘Alī, in highlighting the importance of this form of perseverance, states: “The highest form of happiness is steadfastness in

religion" (Āmidī, 1989, p. 176). A study of Imam Khomeini's Political and Divine Testament reveals that after the Qur'an, the Prophet of Islam occupies a central place in his thought. In the will, the Prophet is mentioned 12 times as "Rasūl" (Messenger), 5 times as "Payāambar" (Persian for Prophet), 4 times as Muḥammad, and twice as "Payghambar" (an alternative Persian form), indicating that after God's Book, the role of the Prophet in shaping the foundational concepts of the discourse of resistance in the thought of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution is clear and undeniable (Arabi & Salari Hamzekhani, 2011, pp. 34–38). One of Imam Khomeini's approaches in shaping leadership was his frequent invocation of the lives and examples of the prophets and other leaders of Islam, especially during times of great difficulty. In moments of heightened challenge, he would recall the tribulations of the Prophet and the early Muslims—such as the hardships endured in the valley of Abū Ṭālib (Shi'b Abī Ṭālib), the sufferings borne by the Prophet in Mecca and Medina, the exhausting battles, the long and painful trials of the Prophet's household (Ahl al-Bayt), the torture of the early Muslims, and the persecution faced by the descendants of the Prophet and their loyal companions (Montazeri & Salmanian, 2022, p. 15).

4-1-5. Imamate: Throughout the history of Shi'ism, imamate has been regarded as the continuation of the mission of prophethood (Hatami Kankaboud, 2022, p. 331). Imam Khomeini, in his explanation of the nature and function of the Imamate, emphasized both its outward (political) and inward (spiritual) dimensions. He considered the Imam to be appointed by God, endowed with inner authority or guardianship (*wilāya bāṭini*), serving as the executor of divine law and the protector of the Islamic order. Imam Khomeini regarded the station of Imamate as so lofty and essential that without it, the Qur'an itself cannot be fully implemented, and the divine law becomes vain (Khomeini, 2017, pp. 134–135). The Imam viewed imamate as a divine principle rooted in the core of religion—essential for guiding society toward salvation—and counted it among the principles of Shiism (Khomeini, 2011, vol. 3, p. 441). In his belief, the Imamate is not a symbolic or conventional role but a divinely instituted, real authority that the Prophet was commanded by God to establish and explicitly declare (Khomeini, 1989, p. 197). Imamate, in his view, has both external and internal aspects: its outward form is governance, while its inward reality is *wilāya*, a spiritual authority whose bearer is the Perfect Human (*insān kāmil*) and the true proof of God (*ḥujjat Allāh*) on earth. Imam Khomeini emphasized that Imamate is a principle of the *madhhab*, not of religion itself, meaning that those who

believe in monotheism, prophethood, and resurrection, but do not accept Imamate in the Shi'i sense, are still considered Muslims both formally and in essence (Khomeini, 2011, vol.3, p.441). Drawing on the Qur'an, the Prophetic tradition, and the insights of authentic Islamic mysticism, Imam Khomeini viewed prophethood and wilāya as deeply interconnected and inseparable. A review of his Political and Divine Testament shows that the names of the Infallible Imams and the Ahl al-Bayt are mentioned 53 times throughout the document, reflecting his profound intimacy with the foundational sources of Islam (Arabi & Salari Hamzekhani, 2011, pp.34–38). Imam Khomeini frequently invoked the Karbala event and the steadfastness of Imam al-Husayn's few companions, reminding people that one should not fear isolation or lack of numbers. The religious exemplars, despite facing the most difficult trials and being few in number, did not fear loneliness—they persevered and resisted, and the fruits of their sacrifice have reached us today (Montazeri & Salmanian, 2022, p. 15).

The concept of resistance in the thought of Imam Khomeini reflects the robustness of this discourse in his view—a discourse undoubtedly rooted in solid sources like the Holy Quran and the sayings of the Infallible Imams. These sources were the fundamental foundations for the establishment of this discourse in the eyes of the leader of the Islamic Revolution. By examining the discourse of resistance in Imam Khomeini's works, we can conclude that various sources and elements played a role in shaping this discourse. The most important of these, without a doubt, were the divine teachings of the Quran and the teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt. Additionally, other aspects such as rationality, justice, opposition to oppression, and support for the oppressed worldwide can be added to this discussion. However, the principal components of the resistance discourse in the view of the founder of the Islamic Revolution are derived from the divine teachings of the Quran, the Prophet Muhammad, and his purified family. This is evident from the fact that the term "Quran" is mentioned 31 times, and "the Book of God" 8 times in Imam Khomeini's political testament, highlighting the central role of the Quran in shaping Imam Khomeini's views on various issues, including the discourse of resistance. After the Quran, the Prophet Muhammad is mentioned 12 times as "Rasūl" (Messenger), 5 times as "payāambar" (Prophet), 4 times as "Muhammad," and 2 times as "Payghambar" (Prophet) in Imam Khomeini's will. This illustrates the important role the Prophet played in shaping the core concepts of the resistance discourse in Imam Khomeini's political thought. Furthermore, the names of the infallible Imams and the Prophet's household

are mentioned 53 times in this divine testament, underscoring Imam Khomeini's deep connection with the authentic sources of Islam. The Quran, as the origin and foundation of the resistance discourse in Imam Khomeini's thought, provided him with the inspiration to bring the discourse of resistance back to life, which he believed had been neglected. Through the teachings of the Quran on resistance—particularly the verses on resistance—he successfully institutionalized this discourse in Islamic societies, especially through the Islamic Revolution, and laid the groundwork for the revolution's victory based on this very discourse. Therefore, the resistance discourse in Imam Khomeini's political thought is deeply rooted in the Quran. The foundation of this discourse stems from Imam Khomeini's profound connection to the Quran, which he never separated himself from—even in the most challenging of circumstances (Arabi & Salari Hamzekhani, 2011, pp. 34-38).

4-1-6. Resurrection: Imam Khomeini, based on the Quran, hadiths, and theological principles, seeks to prove the reality of bodily resurrection. According to him, following the principles of the theory of substantial motion (*ḥarakat jawhariyya*) by Mullā Ṣadrā, the bodily resurrection can be rationally proven (Haghshenas et al., 2021, p. 38). In his book *Al-Tahārah*, he writes: "These three principles [Oneness of God, Prophethood, and Resurrection] are undoubtedly and unquestionably fundamental in the meaning of Islam. The belief in the resurrection, upon some reflection, might also be considered part of these principles. However, the belief in *wilāya* (Guardianship) is certainly not part of the meaning of Islam, and it is only appropriate to regard it as one of the clear and self-evident matters for the rightly guided sect" (Khomeini, 2011, Vol. 3, p. 441). The front of truth believes in the resurrection and life after death. Therefore, death and being killed are not considered defeat, unlike the front of falsehood, which equates death with defeat. For the front of truth, defeat occurs only when it loses its beliefs; otherwise, losing wealth and life in the defense of one's beliefs is not only not considered defeat but is regarded as the means of victory and salvation. From both a rational and experiential perspective, historical experience shows that wherever the front of truth has resisted and stood firm against the front of falsehood, and has not compromised its beliefs and ideals, the final victory has always been with the front of truth. Islam, the true religion, in no way approves of the dominance of the disbelievers over the Muslims, and always advocates resistance: "And Allah will never grant the disbelievers authority over the believers" (Quran, 4:141). This is a universal law among human societies: if a nation makes a

pact and stands firm against hardships, it will achieve great victories and be freed from the oppression of its enemies. The victory of the courageous Iranian nation under the leadership of Imam Khomeini is a clear example of resistance and refusal to accept the domination of the oppressors.

4-2. Sincerity: In order to better understand the concept of sincerity (ikhlās) in Imam Khomeini's view, the following points have been addressed: (1) The concept of sincerity, (2) The importance of sincerity, (3) The role of sincerity, (4) The effects of sincerity, and (5) The consequences of sincerity.

4-2-1. Sincerity from Imam Khomeini's perspective: In his *Arbaʿīn Ḥadīth* (Forty Hadiths), Imam Khomeini defines sincerity and points out that God has asked us to purify our hearts for His sake, so that we may benefit from it. This is because we know very well that God is self-sufficient and independent of all worlds. Therefore, He does not need our worship, sincerity, or servitude. However, because He is the Most Merciful, His vast mercy and infinite wisdom require that He show us the paths of guidance, the distinctions between good and evil, and the contrast between beauty and ugliness. He also offers us the pitfalls on the road to humanity and the stumbling blocks of the path to salvation (Khomeini, 1996, pp. 42-43). In reference to the definition of sincerity, Khwāja ʿAbd Allāh al-Anṣārī says, "Ikhlās is the purification of one's actions from all kinds of impurity." Imam Khomeini comments that this definition is broad, as it encompasses actions that may be tainted by personal desire or the desire to please God's creatures (Khomeini, 1996, p. 328).

4-2-2. Importance of sincerity: Imam Khomeini, regarding the importance of sincerity, says: "All these victories, defeats, reigns, and superpowers are transient. We are sitting here now, and undoubtedly, in a hundred years, there will be no trace of us. It's gone; it has passed. Whether we are victorious, it's gone; if we are defeated, it's gone; if we have power, it's gone; if we don't, it's gone. What remains is what lies ahead of us. What remains is us and the things we carry to the next world. We must think of serving; a service that will be our investment for that world. Winning, conquering, and all these things—if they lack that spiritual dimension—are all failure. In fact, those who appear to be victorious in the eyes of the people are often the most defeated. These great powers, which have existed, exist, and will exist, if they lack that dimension that leads them to happiness, all of it is failure. A few days of eating, sleeping, committing atrocities and treason, and then it's all over—this world closes, and the next world opens. Our record is opened. The entire universe will testify on our behalf, and everything will be present. We must think about how to aid God's cause. If you help Allah, He will help you and

strengthen your feet [Quran, 47:7]" (Khomeini, 2011, vol. 19, pp. 484-485).

4-2-3. The role of sincerity: In reality, sincerity is the source of the effectiveness of all actions. Imam Khomeini states: "If you want to be human, if you want to have human worth, let your actions be for honor, not for mere satisfaction of the body. Let them be for humanity, let them be for God. If you want your actions to succeed, you must free yourself from selfish desires. Satan will not leave you alone. He has sworn by God that he will not allow you to succeed. In my mind, it seems as though Satan has dared God, having sworn to hinder your progress: 'Except for Your sincere servants among them' (Quran, 15:40). You are facing such an oath-bound enemy. You must fight him. As you go through your towns, fight him. Enlighten the people to the fact that there is such an enemy within, the very enemy that has caused the visible tyrants to dominate us. If you overcome this inner enemy, a unity will emerge among you, a brotherhood will arise, your hearts will be free from fear, your attachments to the world will dissolve, and you will be capable of anything. Then, a miracle will occur" (Khomeini, 2011, vol. 19, pp. 484-485).

4-2-4. Effects of sincerity: Imam Khomeini, regarding the effects of sincerity, says: "If people's actions are unified—meaning that their goal is God, and their focus on Him compels them to act—there will be no room for disagreement. All the problems humanity faces arise from within ourselves. This includes not only the actions performed by humans but also those things that come to us from the unseen. Perhaps all these earthquakes, floods, and storms occur because we have not reformed ourselves. If we reform ourselves and those who have influence over the masses—those whom people observe—see what they are doing and follow their example, if those people, whom the public watches and listens to, act with sincerity, if their actions are for God, those who speak do so for God, those who listen do so for God, and similarly those who write, then there will be no room for any conflict or division" (Khomeini, 2011, vol. 14, pp. 204-205).

4-2-5. Consequences of sincerity: Imam Khomeini, drawing on hadiths, identifies some of the effects and signs of sincerity. One such sign is that when people become aware of an action, no excitement or pride should arise in the heart. Another effect of sincerity in acquiring knowledge is that wisdom is attained in the heart and on the tongue. If this is not achieved, it becomes clear that the action was driven by selfish desires and Satan's influence (Khomeini, 1996, pp. 161-394). Furthermore, Imam Khomeini believes that one of the signs of higher degrees of sincerity is that it protects the servant from Satan's whispers, and in this case, Satan's temptation is cut off (Khomeini, 1996,

p. 161). Imam Khomeini holds the belief that sincerity leads to inner peace, strengthens faith, and ensures victory over the enemy (Khomeini, 2011, vol. 20, p. 77). The more sincerity there is in an action, the more perfect and radiant the spirit and essence of that action become (Khomeini, 2009b, p. 16). Additionally, another result of sincerity is drawing closer to God, finding refuge in His protection, and the distancing of Satan's influence. As a person's sincerity grows stronger, the true meaning of seeking refuge in God becomes more realized, and they are safeguarded from Satan's interference to the point where Satan's whispers no longer affect them. This is the state of the mukhlasīn (the sincerely devoted) and the station of permanence after annihilation (Khomeini, 2009a, p. 224). Such individuals are removed from the reach of Satan's temptations, purified from the ranks of polytheism, and are able to attain the truth. According to some divine verses, they are able to describe God as He truly is (Khomeini, 2009a, p. 105).

4-3. Piety: For a better understanding of piety (taqwā) in Imam Khomeini's perspective, we address factors such as (1) the concept of piety, (2), the importance of piety, (3) effects and consequences of piety, and (4) the relation between piety and resistance.

4-3-1. Piety in Imam Khomeini's view: Piety is also one of the key factors that pave the way for the fulfillment of the promise of victory. Imam Khomeini has paid attention to this aspect in the realization of the promise of victory, and in a piece of advice, he stated: "Place your trust in Allah, draw from the spiritual strength of the Muslims, and with the weapon of piety, jihad, patience, and resistance, strike the enemies" (Khomeini, 2011, Vol. 20, p. 321).

4-3-2. The importance of piety: In Islam, piety is emphasized. The one who possesses piety, and the one whose piety is greater, holds more dignity in the sight of Allah (Khomeini, 2011, vol. 6, p. 314). Based on this mystical perspective, Imam Khomeini viewed the world as the presence of God, believing that every responsibility in the Islamic system should be aimed at seeking Allah's pleasure, as all of them will eventually be accounted for. As he said: "The entire world is His presence; the thoughts that pass through the hearts of all are in His presence. And we, in every matter we handle and every responsibility we have in this country, bear a great responsibility before Allah, the Almighty" (Khomeini, 2011, vol. 16, p. 410).

4-3-3. Effects and consequences of piety: Imam Khomeini states in this regard: "All are brothers and equal; dignity lies solely in piety, in moral excellence and righteous deeds" (Khomeini, 2011, vol. 6, p. 453). He also

says: “Honor lies in piety” (Khomeini, 2011, vol. 6, p. 452). Regarding piety, Imam Khomeini affirms: “The Noble Qur’an has set the sole criterion as piety—true piety, fear of God, political piety, material and spiritual piety. The criterion is this: ‘Indeed, the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the most Godwary among you’ (Quran, 49:13). Make piety your guiding principle” (Khomeini, 2011, vol. 1, p. 378).

4-3-4. The relation between piety and resistance: Resistance and steadfastness were the defining qualities that presented Imam Khomeini as a figure of a school, a thought, a movement, and a path—especially in his time and throughout history. These qualities—resistance, steadfastness, and not surrendering to difficulties and obstacles—were paramount. Against the tyrants, Imam showcased his resistance to the entire world. Whether in the face of the internal tyrants during the struggles, when many had grown weary and were on the verge of despair, Imam stood firm. Without any retreat, Imam persisted in the path of struggle. This was true during the period before the victory of the revolution. After the revolution’s triumph, new and more comprehensive pressures emerged against Imam. Yet, Imam never relinquished his commitment to resistance and steadfastness. When I reflect on this trait of Imam and refer to the Qur’anic verses, I see that Imam truly embodied the meanings of many Qur’anic verses through his steadfastness and resistance (Khomeini, 2011, vol. 8, p. 334).

4-3-5. Comprehensive observance of unity and solidarity: From Imam Khomeini's perspective, not every form of unity and gathering is desirable; rather, it is the unity and gathering that are centered around the “clinging to the rope of Allah” that is truly praiseworthy (Khomeini, 2011, vol. 8, p. 334). Imam Khomeini repeatedly emphasized this point by referring to the verse: “And hold firmly to the rope of Allah, all of you, and do not be divided” (Quran, 3:103). In his view, “unity” is the *raison d’être* and ultimate goal of governments. “The establishment of government is for the preservation of order and the unity of Muslims,” as Lady Fatima says in her sermon: “Imamate is for preserving order and transforming the division among Muslims into unity.” Avoiding division and adhering to unity and solidarity among Muslims is of such importance to Imam Khomeini that he issued a fatwa stating: “In both [stations], following the judgment of the Sunni judges is obligatory and sufficient, even if one has doubts about it” (Khomeini, 2011, vol. 10, p. 62). Imam Khomeini viewed unity as the “source of strength” and division as the “cause of the decay of faith.” He warned that “the division existing among the Muslim countries is either due to the treachery of

the leaders of Islamic nations or their ignorance and lack of awareness” (Khomeini, 2011, vol. 4, pp. 232-233).

Conclusion

By studying the thoughts of Imam Khomeini, the reviver of pure Muhammadan Islam, we come to realize that he relied on the foundations of Islamic and Shiite theology, based on religious duty and the conditions of his time. He revived the idea of resistance against global imperialism, which he identified as the symbol of the unjust global system, in order to liberate the oppressed and establish the rule of the downtrodden over the world, opposing the arrogant powers, especially the United States, the "Great Satan." He stepped into the field of struggle and achieved victory with the dawn of the glorious Islamic Revolution in 1979. After the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the perspective of the Islamic nations on the concept of resistance shifted, and the necessity and effectiveness of steadfastness against tyranny became clear to them. Consequently, resistance movements modeled after Imam Khomeini's approach to confronting imperialism emerged in various Islamic countries. Although his perspective on resistance is rooted in Shiite theology, it was never confined to a particular place, geography, religion, sect, or gender. In fact, what we now witness in the world in opposition to global imperialism and Zionism is a continuation of this pure thought.

Imam Khomeini, with a theological monotheistic orientation, offered a redefinition of resistance. The core of his discourse on perseverance is not separate from Islam; rather, it is deeply rooted in Quranic teachings and manifests in the light of the Quran and the Sunnah. The theory and model of resistance in Islam also has its own specific components, indicators, policies, and strategies, which can be identified through the clear texts of Islam, particularly in the Quran and the sayings of the Ahl al-Bayt. Imam Khomeini, by emphasizing the role of faith and resistance in defeating the enemy, highlighted the necessity of maintaining faith in advancing the revolution. He believed that everything was aligned with divine providence and destiny. The true salvation and perfection of a human being, which is the primary purpose of creation, lies in their resistance on the path of truth, which is, in fact, the path designated by the prophets (the principle of prophethood) and the Infallible Imams, continuing their legacy. An explicit example of the emphasis on Shiite theological principles (monotheism, divine justice, prophethood, Imamate, resurrection) in his resistance thought is the Islamic Revolution of

Iran and the Sacred Defense (Iran-Iraq War), which demonstrates the profound unity of the Lord of the worlds (monotheism), the firm belief in His will (divine justice), the light of Muhammad's mission (prophethood), the leadership of Ali (Imamate), and the belief in the eternal life of martyrs on the path of truth after death (resurrection). This reflects the strategic depth of his unwavering thought. Islam, the true religion, never condones the domination of non-believers over Muslims, always urging resistance. The victory of the brave Iranian nation, led by Imam Khomeini, stands as a prime example of the implementation of the strategic thought of resistance, which is the result of his theological reflections.

He believes that sincerity leads to peace of mind, strength of faith, and piety, which are key factors in fulfilling the promise of victory. Imam Khomeini, through his faith, sincerity, and piety, stood against both domestic tyranny and global imperialism, resisting them and laying the groundwork for the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran and its spread across the world. Today, we witness the growing strength of the resistance axis and the decline and destruction of the arrogant powers worldwide. This achievement would not have been possible without absolute adherence to God, the Prophet, the Infallibles, and the Guardianship of the Jurist (*Wilāyat al-Faqīh*), alongside a comprehensive commitment to unity and solidarity. The theological and ideological foundations of Imam Khomeini, although shared by many past and contemporary scholars, were distinct in certain aspects. While many of these great scholars did not support the idea of revolt or the establishment of a government before the appearance of the Mahdi, Imam Khomeini's unique perspective emphasized the importance of attaining power to fulfill religious duties, particularly in the serious confrontation with oppression, resistance against imperialism, and assistance to the oppressed. This viewpoint led to a transformation in his thought, ultimately leading to the formation of an Islamic government and the establishment of a base for resistance. This way of thinking not only resulted in the Islamic Revolution of Iran, the capital of global resistance, but also gave rise to anti-imperialist resistance movements around the world. It has shaped the vision of Muslim and non-Muslim seekers of freedom, who oppose oppression. This vision is the direct result of Imam Khomeini's theological principles of resistance.

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