

A Study of the Concept of Origin (Mabda') and Return (Ma'ad) in the Mystical Thought of Seyyed Ruhollah Mousavi Khomeini

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Abstract

The conscious acceptance of hijab in contemporary society is influenced by the complex interaction between family, school, media, and the cultural transformations of the digital age. The proliferation of new media, changing patterns of socialization, and evolving lifestyles have altered the attitudes of the new generation toward hijab, highlighting the necessity of rethinking educational methods more than ever. The present study was conducted with the aim of presenting a conceptual model for the conscious acceptance of hijab based on the interaction of family, school, and media in the context of cultural changes, from the perspective of female secondary school principals in Lamerd County. The research employed an exploratory mixed-methods approach. The research population consisted of 15 female principals of lower and upper secondary schools in Lamerd County, who were selected purposefully. Data were collected through open-ended questions and semi-structured interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings led to the extraction of 65 initial codes, 20 sub-themes, and 7 main themes, including: cultural and social changes affecting attitudes toward hijab; the role of cyberspace in redefining attitudes; rethinking the role of the educational system; the family as the most important context for transmitting values; effective education for the conscious acceptance of hijab; pathology of existing cultural programs; and solutions to reduce the value gap. Based on the relationships among the themes, the conceptual model of the research was designed, which demonstrates that the conscious acceptance of hijab is the result of the synergistic interaction of family, school, and media within the context of cultural changes. The results indicate that persuasive, dialogical, participatory, and media literacy-based approaches have a greater capacity for the internalization of cultural values and reducing the generational value gap compared to authoritarian methods.

Keywords: Conscious Acceptance of Hijab, Family, School, Media, Cultural Changes, Thematic Analysis, Conceptual Model.

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Research Background

The discussion of "Origin and Return" has long held a central place in Islamic philosophy and mysticism. Ibn Sina in his book *"Al-Mabda' wa al-Ma'ad"* has elaborately proven the Necessary Being, His attributes, and bodily resurrection. Mulla Sadra also in works with the same title, based on the primacy of existence, has rationally proven bodily resurrection.

Regarding the thought of Ruhollah Mousavi Khomeini, numerous studies have been conducted. Some research has examined the unity of existence from his perspective and shown that he believes in the personal unity of existence (unity of manifestation) and considers the world to be the manifestation of the Divine Essence.

Another group has undertaken to explain death, resurrection, and afterlife matters in Imam's mystical works and shown that he interprets the grave as "human traits" and the pressure of the grave as "unworthy traits" that are unveiled for a person after death. Researchers have also pointed to the stages of wayfaring from Imam's perspective, which through seven stages—awakening, repentance, piety, emptying, adorning, illumination, and annihilation—lead the wayfarer to the station of annihilation in God.

However, the innovation of the present article lies in that, with an integrated view, it examines the ontological link between Origin and Return in the thought of Imam Khomeini under the concept of "journey from God to God" and shows that these two are not two separate points, but two sides of a continuous movement. Also, this article for the first time systematically presents four ontological layers—manifestation and appearance, epistemological, and movement—in explaining the Origin, and four axes—reverse journey, change of existential rank, link with the Origin, and intuitive presence—in explaining the Return.

Introduction

In the worldview of Ruhollah Mousavi Khomeini, existence is a continuous and purposeful movement. From his perspective, the world is not a random entity but the manifestation of divine power and knowledge. This article examines how Imam has linked "Origin" (the starting point of existence) and "Return" (the point of return and perfection) through the lens of theoretical and practical mysticism.

1. The Concept of Origin: The Manifestation of the Divine Essence in the World of Existence

From the perspective of Ruhollah Mousavi Khomeini, the Origin of the world is God Almighty, but this Origin is known through "manifestation." He believed that the world is nothing but the manifestation of divine names and attributes. The Origin is the very reality that has shown itself in the mirrors of existence. Movement from the Origin means exiting from non-existence toward existence, and this existence is directly from God. In fact, everything that exists is from Him and for Him. To explain "Origin" from Khomeini's mystical perspective, we must pass through the superficial layers of theology (God as Creator) and enter his ontology. In his mysticism, the Origin is not merely a "starting point" but a "flowing reality" in all things. The Origin can be defined in four deep mystical layers.

1-1. The Ontological Layer: The Origin as "Pure Existence"

In his view, the world is not made from something separate from God. From the perspective of Ruhollah Mousavi Khomeini, the reality of existence is the source of all perfections and goods, and no existence other than His existence can be conceived (Khomeini, 1380, p. 22). In his thought, the world and what is in it are the manifestation of the Divine Essence, and all are existential and objective manifestations of the Divine Presence, whose multiplicity does not impair the unity of that single reality but confirms it (Khomeini, 1380, p. 25).

Unity of Existence: Ruhollah Mousavi Khomeini believes that there is only one real "existence," and that is God. What we see in the world (tree, human, star) do not in fact "exist," but are "manifestations" or "appearances" of that single existence. The Origin as the Source of Emanation: The Origin here means the source from which existence continuously flows. Therefore, movement from the Origin toward the world is in fact the movement of "manifestation" from the state of unity to the state of multiplicity.

1-2. The Layer of Appearance and Manifestation: The Origin in the Mirror of Multiplicity

One of the most beautiful concepts in his thought is the relationship between the Origin (the One) and the world (the many). Ruhollah Khomeini in his commentary on Sharh Fusus al-Hikam introduces the "Reality of Realities" as "the objective self-subsistent manifestation in the collective unitary station of annihilative unity" (Khomeini, 1392, p. 45). According to him, realities are the essences and names in their collective unity, and the particulars are the same in terms of their multiplicity and detail (ibid., p. 48). He elsewhere emphasizes that "all beings, according to the reality of existence, are appearances and manifestations of that absolute and infinite existence, and none has any independence of its own" (Khomeini, 1386, p. 114).

Manifestation of Names and Attributes: He believes that God (the Origin), in order to be known, has shown Himself in the mirrors of existence. Every being in the world is a reflection of one of the divine names. Example of the mirror: If we consider the Origin as the "sun," the world is like "multiple mirrors." The mirrors themselves have no light, but they reflect the sunlight. So the Origin (the sun) is present in all mirrors (beings), but It itself is one.

1-3. The Epistemological Layer: Knowing the Origin through the "Self"

In his mysticism, the path to knowing the "Origin" passes through knowing the "self." Imam believes that "man does not perceive himself except through the veil of perception, let alone the perception of the Truth" (Khomeini, 1380, p. 184). Therefore, the path to knowing the Origin is possible through self-purification and passing beyond the veils of the self. In his commentary on the Hadith of Mi'raj, he says: "Whoever knows himself knows his God; and self-knowledge is the key to the knowledge of God" (ibid., p. 186).

Man, the smallest manifestation of the Origin: From his perspective, the Perfect Man is the most complete manifestation of the Origin in the world, because man possesses all divine attributes at a lower level.

Journey from within to without: He emphasizes that if one wants to know the Origin, one should not only look outside oneself; rather, one must journey

within. When a person passes beyond the veils of the self, he sees that the Origin is in truth present in his soul.

1-4. The Layer of Movement: The Link of the Origin with "Wayfaring and Journey"

The Origin in his thought is the starting point of a great journey. Ruhollah Mousavi Khomeini attached great importance to wayfaring and believed that the foundation of acquiring all spiritual stations is wayfaring (Khomeini, 1380, p. 9). In explaining this movement, he says: "The wayfarer must return from the plane of multiplicity to unity, and this return is the very journey toward God, which after the journey in God reaches perfection" (Khomeini, 1386, p. 140).

2. The Concept of Return: Return to Absolute Perfection

In the view of Ruhollah Mousavi Khomeini, the Return is not merely a physical or post-death event, but a "spiritual return" and a "return to perfection." He emphasized that the greatest return is reaching the station of the "Perfect Man." By purifying the soul, a person in this very world reaches the station of nearness to God, which is itself a prelude to the Return. If the Origin was the manifestation of God, the Return also means the return of these manifestations to their original source. In the path of return, man must move from multiplicity (the plurality of beings) to unity (oneness with the Truth).

In the mystical thought of Ruhollah Mousavi Khomeini, the Return is beyond a "time" or "place"; rather, the Return is "the rank of perfection and return to the origin." To elaborate this, it can be analyzed in the following four axes.

2-1. The Return as "Reverse Journey" (from Multiplicity to Unity)

From the mystical perspective of Ruhollah Mousavi Khomeini, existence has a two-way movement. Imam, like some mystics, calls the journey from the origin of creation to the destination of creation the "arc of descent" and the journey from the farthest point to the point of origin the "arc of ascent" (Khomeini, 1386, p. 50). In explaining this movement, he says: "Just as beings have a journey from the Truth toward creation, the return is also from creation toward the Truth, and this is the true Return" (ibid., p. 52).

Movement from the Origin toward the world (manifestation): God (the Origin) through the manifestation of names and attributes has entered from the state of "unity" to the state of "multiplicity" (plurality of beings).

Movement from the world toward the Origin (Return): The Return is the very reverse movement, meaning the movement of beings from dispersion and material multiplicity toward divine oneness and unity. So the Return is the end of every particle's return to its original source.

2-2. The Return as "Change of Existential Rank"

In his mysticism, the Return does not necessarily mean "change of place," but "elevation of the rank of existence." Ruhollah Khomeini believes: "The station of corporeality and the outward form of man in the afterlife and the plane beyond nature is subject to the spiritual form and the station of the soul, and the hidden and inward faculties of the soul are the source of all good and evil traits" (Khomeini, 1380, p. 315). He also considers annihilation in the Divine Essence as the

"Greater Resurrection" and the wayfarer's exit from the horizon of determinations in the arc of ascent as the "Day of Resurrection" (Khomeini, 1392, p. 122).

In his philosophical treatises, it is stated: "The Return is not that which is in this very plane of nature; for this is a denial of the Return and a denial of the return to God and an affirmation of the world of nature and its eternalization... The Return is another plane and above nature, and in the Return there is a return to God due to the nearness that that plane has to the world of divinity" (Khomeini, 1381, vol. 3, p. 152).

Transformation from the material rank to the spiritual rank: Beings in this world are in the rank of multiplicity and materiality. In the station of the Return, the human soul exits from the bodily cocoon and reaches a rank of existence that is compatible with the reality of the spirit.

Existential perfection: The Return is reaching a rank in which the veils are removed and the being faces its own reality and the reality of the Truth. So the Return is "the perfection of existence."

2-3. The Inseparable Link between Origin and Return

In his thought, the Origin and the Return are not two points on a line, but two sides of a coin. In the ontological view of Ruhollah Khomeini, "the oneness of the Origin and the Return brings about harmony and organic unity in the world of creation" (Khomeini, 1386, p. 60). Professor Morteza Motahhari refers to this principle with the phrase "from Him and toward Him" (Motahhari, 1385, vol. 2, p. 273). He himself says in this regard: "All beings have appeared from Him and return to Him; the beginning and the end of all is to Him" (Khomeini, 1380, p. 42).

Unity in duality: From the mystic's perspective, that from which we have come (the Origin) and that toward which we go (the Return) are in fact a single reality. The difference is only in the "intensity and weakness of manifestation."

Journey from God to God (min Allah ila Allah): This key phrase indicates that the path begins from God and ends in God. Therefore, the Return is in fact a return to the same "Origin," but at a rank of perfection and awareness that did not exist at the beginning of creation (at the rank of multiplicity).

2-4. The Return in the Station of "Intuition and Presence"

One of the subtlest points in his mysticism is that the Return begins in this very world when a person reaches the station of the "Perfect Man." Ruhollah Khomeini believed in the Origin and Return so much that "as if the veils were removed from before his eyes and he was observing the metaphysical with his own eyes" (Khomeini, 1380, p. 330). In his biography of the mystics, he writes: "For the perfect wayfarer, the Return begins in this very world; because he sees the presence of the Truth in all things through inner intuition, and this is the lesser resurrection" (ibid., p. 332).

The Return before death: One who in this world has reached the station of intuition through self-purification and knowledge has in fact experienced his own "Return." He has passed beyond material veils and sees God's presence in everything. Therefore, for the mystic, the Return is "presence before the Truth" that can be experienced even while alive.

3. The Link between Origin and Return (Wayfaring and Journey)

The key point in his thought is the concept of "wayfaring and journey." Ruhollah Mousavi Khomeini believed that the path of human life should be such: it begins from God (the Origin) and ends in God (the Return). In this view, the Return means the end of this path. If a person in the path of his movement understands the reality of the Origin, his Return is reaching divine satisfaction and annihilation in the Truth.

The link between Origin and Return in the mystical thought of Ruhollah Mousavi Khomeini is one of his deepest and most fundamental ontological concepts. In this view, the Origin and the Return are not two separate phenomena, but two sides of a single reality and two stages of a continuous movement. To understand this link, one must pass through the concept of "unity of existence" and "wayfaring and journey." The link between Origin and Return can be explained in four main axes.

3-1. The Link in the Form of "a Two-Way Movement" (Wayfaring and Journey)

In his mysticism, existence is composed of a single movement that has two directions. Ruhollah Mousavi Khomeini considers the movement of things from the Origin to the farthest point based on the principle of manifestation, and the movement from the farthest point toward the Origin based on the principle of heart and love of every branch to return to its origin and source (Khomeini, 1386, p. 45). In this regard, he says: "The arc of descent and the arc of ascent are both a single real movement that begins from the Truth and ends in the Truth, and their difference is only in direction and existential rank" (ibid., p. 48).

Journey from the Origin toward the world (descent/manifestation): God (the Origin) from the state of unity, through manifestation and appearance, appears in the form of multiplicity (the world). This means we move from "one" toward "many."

Journey from the world toward the Origin (ascent/Return): The Return is the very reverse movement, meaning beings move from dispersion and material multiplicity toward unity and oneness to return to their original source.

Conclusion: The link between the two is that "the Return is the return of the initial movement." The return path is exactly the same path that was traversed during manifestation, but this time with a conscious view and through perfection.

3-2. The Link in the Form of "Ontological Identity" (min Allah ila Allah)

One of the most key expressions in his thought is the phrase "journey from God to God" (sayr min Allah ila Allah). This phrase shows the link between Origin and Return in an unparalleled way. In his thought, "the political system in Islam (like its other systems) begins with monotheism and ends with monotheism" (Khomeini, 1380, p. 405). This principle shows that the path begins from God and ends in God. In explaining this single identity, he says: "The Origin and the Return are in reality one thing; that from which we have come and that toward which we go are both Him, and the difference is only in the intensity and weakness of manifestation" (Khomeini, 1392, p. 180).

The Origin is the same "Allah" from whom we have come; the Return is the same Allah toward whom we go. This link shows that there is no distance between the two; rather, it is only our "perception and awareness" that changes along the path. We begin from "God in the station of Creator and Originator" (the Origin) and reach "God in the station of the Beloved and the Intuitive Reality" (the Return).

3-3. The Link in the Form of "Manifestation and the Return of Manifestation"

In his view, everything in the world is a manifestation of the Origin. So the Return is in fact "the return of the manifestation to the source." When a being (e.g., a human) is in this world, he is in fact spending the period of "manifestation." In the station of the Return, this manifestation changes from the state of "hidden in multiplicity" to the state of "manifest in unity." So the link between the two is this: the Origin is the cause of appearance, and the Return is the cause of return. Without the Origin, the Return has no meaning, and without the Return, the movement of the Origin toward perfection (among beings) remains incomplete.

Conclusion

The examination of the mystical thought of Ruhollah Mousavi Khomeini about the Origin and the Return shows a coherent, purposeful, and thoroughly monotheistic system in his ontology. The result is that in this worldview, the Origin and the Return are not two independent and alien categories, but two sides of a continuous movement and two sides of a single reality, which is the Sacred Divine Essence. Imam, by emphasizing the fundamental principle of "personal unity of existence," introduces the world and everything in it as the manifestation and appearance of the names and attributes of the Truth, and thus does not grant any independence to the multiplicity of beings from the unity of the Origin (Khomeini, 1380, p. 25). In contrast, the Return is also not merely an event after death or a change of place, but the conscious, loving, and perfected return of these very manifestations to their original source, which is objectively realized in the arc of ascent and ultimately in the station of "annihilation in God" (Khomeini, 1392, p. 122).

The most important achievement of this research is the explanation of the inseparable link between the Origin and the Return in the key form of "journey from God to God." Based on this view, the entire existence is defined in a two-way movement: the arc of descent, movement from unity to multiplicity (manifestation), and the arc of ascent, movement from multiplicity to unity (Return). These two arcs, although having different directions, form a single reality whose starting and ending point is the infinite Essence of God (Khomeini, 1386, p. 48). In addition to the theoretical and philosophical aspect, this view has very important practical implications for human wayfaring. Ruhollah Khomeini believes that the true wayfarer, in this very material plane, through struggle against the self and moral purification, can experience the "lesser resurrection" and attain the unveiled intuition of the presence of the Truth (Khomeini, 1380, p. 332).

Thus, the Origin and the Return in his thought not only delineate the ontological foundation of the world but also provide the roadmap of human wayfaring for

attaining divine nearness. Ultimately, his outstanding innovation is that he has been able to blend the profound teachings of theoretical mysticism with the Qur'anic concepts of monotheism and the Return in such a way that it both answers the philosophical doubts of his time and clearly delineates the practical path of perfection for the seekers of truth; for, in his own words, "all beings have appeared from Him and return to Him; the beginning and the end of all is to Him" (Khomeini, 1380, p. 42).

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