

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

RAJ'A رَجْع or Emanationism (Which one is Islamic?)-Some Thoughts.

Emanationism is Platonic monism, and an idea in the cosmology or cosmogony of certain religious or philosophical systems. Emanation from the Latin '**emanare**' meaning "to flow from", is the mode by which all things are derived from the First Reality, or Principle. All things are derived from the first reality or perfect god by steps of degradation to lesser degrees of the first reality or God, and at every step the emanating beings are less pure, less perfect, less divine. Emanationism is a transcendent principle **from** which everything is derived (Allah is the **source**), and is opposed to both **Creationism** (wherein the universe is created by a sentient Allah who is separate from creation) and **materialism** (which posits no underlying subjective and/or ontological nature behind phenomena, being immanent). The principle of Emanationism is from Greek Philosophy and has nothing to do with Islam or the Quran. It is thus, imperative that words like "Allah is the Source" and that creation is "from Allah" be used with much care and explanation.

That complex things are created in nature is not in question by Creationists (Abrahamic religions, etc.), Emanationists, Pagan mystics, nihilists and atheists; rather, the two principles that are in question are the locus for creation and whether a sentient, self-aware Absolute ('God') is a necessity for creation. Emanationists such as Pythagoras, Plotinus, and others argued that complex patterns in nature were a natural consequence of procession from the One (Hen, Absolute).

According to Emanationism, the Absolute, its nature and its activity must be inseparably one thing only, viz, will be such that the nature and activity of the Absolute is both one and the same (again, will) and by its very nature is also its activity 'to will' and wills things to be or occur, thereby maintaining the center of the logical system of Emanationism. In addition, agnosis, or the lack of Subjective gnosis, is a primordial privation which must be corrected before a metaphysical "Oneing" (Plotinus) can occur. Through this process, the transcendent yet immanent will of individuals is made self-reflexive by recollecting back further and further. Eventually it will reach that nature, the Noetic (and real) self, which is antecedent to the phenomenal, corporeal self. The ontologically transcendent yet immanent Self is seen as being one's unactualized nature, and this nature will remain unactualized until contemplation is brought to fruition, thereby bringing into actuality what had been merely potential. (this theory negates the process of development in the Hereafter-

9 He is indeed successful who causes it to grow,

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَرَكَهَا

According to this paradigm, creation proceeds as an effulgence from the First Principle (the Absolute or Godhead). The Supreme Light or Consciousness descends through a series of stages, gradations, worlds or hypostases, becoming progressively more material and embodied. **In time it will turn around to return to the One (epistrophe), retracing its steps through spiritual knowledge and contemplation.** And this is **NOT**

Raj'a رَجْع

At this point it would be prudent to look briefly at the surrounding circumstances influencing the primitive modifications in Christianity consisting in the main of Judaic Christianity, Gnostic Christianity and African Christianity. The last one exists today as the belief then existed and remained as such after the Council of Nicae. Judaic Christianity fell away long before the Council of Nicae as a result of the Jewish disappointment at the temporal power of the Messiah and the additional prominent reason being the doctrine of Trinity and the eventual downfall of Jerusalem. Gnostic Christianity persisted because of the influence of the doctrine of Emanation. Amongst all this there remained the Unitarian Christianity called the Ebionite who regarded Jesus as mere man (It is reported that Waraqa bin Nofal was an Ebionite).

Trinity, a word which does not occur in the Holy Scriptures, and which was first introduced by Theophilus, the Bishop of Antioch, the seventh from the apostles, had become infused in Egypt and all over the Middle East. The

men who followed this doctrine modified the Gnostic idea to suit their own back ground and bringing up in line with the Greek philosophy asserting that the principle from which the Universe originated was something emitted (emanated) from the Supreme Mind, and capable of being drawn into it again (the incorrect Kufr concept of Raj'a- رجع), like they supposed was the case with the ray and the sun. The "emanation" like the ray of the sun, they affirmed, was permanently attached to the "Saviour", and hence He may be considered as God. Thus, there were in his person three parts: **a body, a soul and a Logos** (word or spirit), hence he was both God and man.

In A.D. 132 Justin Martyr, who had been a Platonic philosopher, believed that the divine ray, after it was attached to Jesus, was never withdrawn from him, or ever separated from his source (the folly of using words like "source" and "return"-without appreciating the paucity of the English language). He further illustrates this argument by stating that as the Logos (word) goes forth from one, it enters the other, conveying to the other the meaning from the Originator, while the same remains in the person who speaks; thus the Logos of the Father continues in Himself, though imparted to the Christ; or as from one lamp another may be lighted without any loss of splendour so the **Divinity of the Father is transferred to the Son**. This is what ended up in the Nicene Creed, "God of God, Light of Light". This for Muslim consumption, is what is meant by the "Sunni Bareilly" Aqidah of Muhammad AS being created from the Noor of Allah, and then the rest of the Universe from the Noor of Muhammad AS. Thus the fear of incorrect conceptions created by speakers at Masajid and other audiences, is very real, if these words are not explained properly.

The Quranic concept of رجع is :

The Dictionary (Lughat) meaning as follows:

Let's begin the discussion somewhat differently; رَجَعْتُ رَجْعًا Ruju: means to turn back and رَجَعْتُ رَجْعًا

Raja'un to return: to come back, according to Taj. The common usage of رَجَعْتُ رَجْعًا Raj'at: to turn back: the meaning in which we use Raj'at is not the correct meaning derived from the root. Thus Raj'at would mean to fall back as a figure of speech. For somebody to move back from an "original" position would mean "a reactionary" through usage and the meaning has deteriorated to lowliness and retrogressing (falling back). But in proper Arabic usage, it means to return to the former "state"; or to move to a better condition than before. In marriage "Ar Raj'a would mean to re-marry a woman after divorcing her (first and second Talaq) that is to return to the prior state.

In Arabic conversation لَيْسَ لِي مِنْ فُلَانٍ رَجْعٌ (laisa li fulanin Raj'a) would mean that, "I have had no benefit from that man: that is, nothing ever was returned by him" The Arabs have a saying:

مَا هُوَ إِلَّا سَجُنٌ لَيْسَ تَحْتَهُ رَجْعٌ (ma huwa illa sajun laisa tahtahu Raj'a); this

is only Raj'a and there is no benefit in it. Thus أَرَجَعْتُ الْإِبِلَ (arja'atil ibl) means for a camel

to fatten again after becoming weak; سَفْرَةٌ مَرْجِيَةٌ (safratun marji'ah) is a journey in which

there is some benefit: مَرْجِيَةٌ (murje'un) means a very beneficial thing: and رَجِيٌّ (Raj'ii) is a

rope which has become unravelled but twined again.

Raj'a means to return; a thing which revolves comes back to the place it commenced from. In this manner, every

revolving thing has Raj'a, رَجَعْتُ رَجْعًا; In Surah At Tariq-86:11 The Quran states:

وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الرَّجْعِ (was sama-i zaatir Raj'a) "This would mean that the bodies in space at every level of the atmosphere are revolving, and return to the place they have travelled from, or the objects in space turn back (to their starting point) or come to the fore".

Rajal ilaihi, رَجَعَ إِلَيْهِ , means “to turn for help towards or to have recourse to (according to Lane).
 Raj'un, رَجَعٌ also means “reaction” and for “any result to be formulated”.

Raj'un also means “hail”; because it gives back to the earth what it took from it (water) and therefore, could also mean rain (according to Taj) which would result or add to surface water.

The Qur'an ion Surah 2 Verse 18 states:

18 Deaf, dumb, (and) blind,^a so they return not: صَمٌّ بَلْمٌ عَمَىٰ نِيْمًا لَا يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

to understand the meaning of Yarjioon, يَرْجِعُونَ , it is necessary to understand the historical context at the very beginning and according to the Quran: When Nabi Muhammad AS presented his message, there were two sorts of people before him: one were the Ahle Kitaab, those who had received Revelation in the past and at one time or another were on the right path but had later digressed. They were told to return to the right path or Haq but rejected the Revelations. Secondly, there were those who were receiving the Revelation for the first time. When they refused to accept this Revelation and Truth, Haq, the Quran referred to them as “Deaf, dumb and blind, and they shall not return to the Truth.

The Qur'an uses these words in other places e.g. Moosa AS when as a baby he was returned to his mother and (Surah 20 Verse 40) and In Surah 24 Verse 28 and also in reference to Yusuf AS in Surah 12 Verse 63- all meaning some form of returning.

In Surah Namal 27 Verse 28 the emissaries of Nabi Suleiman AS was told to return and not wait for a response or reaction.

In Surah 50 Verse 3 the Quran states

3 When we die and become dust — إِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا ذَلِكَ رَجْعٌ بَعِيدٌ ﴿٣﴾
 that is a far return.

and the word “Raj'un” here used as a figure of speech meaning a return to life after death.

The meaning becomes clearer in the exposition Surah 50 Verses 3 & 4 below:

3. (Moreover they are surprised at Quran's assertion that life is not restricted to this world only. They ask in surprise) "Would we be returning to life again after we have died and have been reduced to dust? It is far fetched to believe that the dead shall become alive again!"

4. Tell them We know what the earth consumes of them. (It is only the physical body that disintegrates. It has neither any effect nor any control over human personality or self.) Deeds affect human personality (self) and not the body. Therefore through the preservation of human personality (self) all deeds of a person are fully preserved with Us. (The continuation of this process is called 'the life hereafter'.)

Now let's look at the non-Quranic understanding of Surah 2 Verse 156:

156 Who, when a misfortune befalls them, say: Surely we are Allāh's, and to Him we shall return.^a الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ ﴿١٥٦﴾

It is a common practice amongst Muslims to utter the second part of the above verse when they hear of a tragedy or death and in their heart they believe that “We are from Allah and will return to Him”. This understanding has two distinct misunderstanding: One is that, we were with Allah sometime before being born

(into this world) and, the other is that, after death we shall be gathered in a ground on the Day of the Judgment where Allah too would be present and thus this is the “return” to Him. This concept is non-Quranic as it confines Allah to a physical place in time and space whereas Allah is beyond time and space. This understanding is

“baatil” (false). Allah is everywhere, and, in Surah 57 Verse 5: **وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ** (hua ma’akum ainama kuntum) meaning, “means and He is with you wherever you are (not physically, but that His Law is with all), and this goes for every creation, every atom in this Universe and beyond”. What will be the condition of the life Hereafter? How will good deeds be rewarded and bad deeds punished? These are issues which cannot be understood in this world and our puny minds; we have some simple indications from the Quran. Another exposition explains this concept in Surah 57 Verse 4, thus:

4. He has created the heavens and earth after passing them through six different aeons; and he has kept its central control in His own hands. He knows everything that enters the earth and all that comes out of it; as well as all that descends from the sky and all that ascends towards it. He is with you wherever you happen to be and He sees whatever you do.

One thing becomes very clear and that is “for the dead to go towards a place where Allah will be present is not a Qur’anic concept; as this means that Allah is physical in one place. All the above examples and meaning refer to a return to a physical position or are figures of speech and in some cases allegorical, but in this instance we need to be careful that we do not mix **Emanationism** in the Quran.

The second situation that arises has been born out of Tasawwuf (Sufism). “Vedant” or Hindu Sufism believes that the human soul is part of the greater soul or God. This part after being separated from the whole has been bogged down and is impatient to join with the whole again. At death at last this impatient part will rejoin with the whole as birds return to their nests in the evening. This concept is now shared by us. Virtuous people’s souls will rejoin with their whole (God) and this is the success of life. Such people call death as “wisaal or reuniting” because they think that the part will one day re-join with the whole. This is a non-Qur’anic concept because man and Allah are not part of a whole, meaning that if a part departs from the whole then the whole is incomplete and can only become whole by the return of the part that was sent beyond, and signifying some weakness in Allah. The concept of the **human soul** is also incorrect from the Quranic point of view.

Let’s look at the meaning of “direction or way” by examining Raajioon, **رَاجِعُونَ** with ilahi (towards Him), **إِلَيْهِ**; because we consider “ilaih” or “ilaina” to mean direction or movement towards, although this is not the meaning everywhere in the Qur’an where these words are used. For example in Surah 25 Verse 45/46:

45 Seest thou not how thy Lord extends the shade? And if He pleased, He would have made it stationary. Then We have made the sun an indication of it,

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَىٰ سَرِيحٍ كَيْفَ مَدَّ الظِّلَّ
وَلَوْ شَاءَ لَجَعَلَهُ سَاكِنًا ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَا
الشَّمْسَ عَلَيْهِ دَلِيلًا ۝

46 Then We take it to Ourselves, taking little by little.^a

ثُمَّ قَبَضْنَاهُ إِلَيْنَا قَبْضًا يَسِيرًا ۝

Again, another exposition explains it thus:

45. (Leaving animals aside, even inanimate objects follow just one and the same path.) Have you not observed how the Divine Law of the universe causes a shadow to lengthen (in the afternoon) If We had so desired We could have made the Law whereby (the earth would not revolve and) the shadow would stay the same. (But We have co-related the sun and the earth in such a way that) The shadow of each object continues increasing and decreasing in relation to its position with respect to the sun. (Thus the sun becomes its point of reference; and accordingly we can approximate the shadow after considering the position of the sun.)
46. Then as the sun passes the meridian the shadows start increasing. Thereafter We gradually draw them towards Us (and with the setting of the sun the shadows disappear).

The above explains that the shadows do not move towards Allah but that according to the laws of Allah the shadows become shorter; therefore, "ilahi raajeon" would mean to move according to the law of Allah towards what Allah had ordained as the concept of Mukafat-e-Amal or the concept of cause and effect or consequences of one's action –towards the realisation of this Law.

In Surah 3 Verse 82 Surah Aali Imran States:

83 Seek they then other than Allāh's religion? And to Him submits whoever is in the heavens and the earth, willingly or unwillingly, and to Him they will be returned.^a

أَفَتَدْرِيْنَ دِيْنَ اللّٰهِ يَبْعُوْنَ وَآلِهَآ اَسْلَمَ
مَنْ فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَآلْاَرْضِ كُلُوْعًا وَّ
كُرْهًا وَّ اِلَيْهٖ يُرْجَعُوْنَ ۝

Everything is revolving around Allah and is operative according to His laws. This idea is repeated again in Surah Yasin, Surah 36:

83 So glory be to Him in Whose hand is the kingdom of all things! and to Him you will be returned.

فَسُبْحٰنَ الَّذِىْ بِيْدِهٖ مَلَكُوْتُ كُلِّ
شَيْءٍ وَّ اِلَيْهٖ تُرْجَعُوْنَ ۝

The Personality of Allah is far beyond man's concepts of Him; everything is run by Him; therefore, everything moves according to the laws created by Him; everything operates according to His law; Nothing can move away from this Law; and since man is included in 'everything', he too is not an exception to this rule; **every action or deed of his is tied to the natural chain of events; thus every step he takes is going towards Him.** (wa ilahi turje-oon).

Now let's look at the results of one's actions in relation to the non-physical Universe:

When man **thinks** he needs nobody (is independent of everybody and everything-Allah is the only Al Samad)

7 Because he looks upon himself as self-sufficient.^a

اَنْ سَرَّآءُ اسْتَعٰنِى ۝

8 Surely to thy Lord is the return.

اِنَّ اِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ الرَّجْعٰى ۝

Man can NEVER go out of the circle of natural consequences (Mukafat-e-Amal); Man WILL return to this Law by all means; this Truth has been acknowledged as

4 And if they reject thee — truly messengers before thee were rejected. And to Allāh are all affairs returned.

وَ اِنْ يُكْفِرْ بِكَ فَقَدْ كَفَرَتْ رُسُلُ
مَنْ قَبْلِكَ وَاِلَى اللّٰهِ تُرْجَعُ الْاُمُوْرُ ۝

In Surah 35 Verse 4 that is, here, every human being is a member of the universal brotherhood : but for the sake of their own interests they have divided it into many parts; Surah 21 Verse 93 and Surah 21 Verse 94; thus he who stays steadfast on the enabling program and he is also a Momin (believer) then his efforts always have results. See also 2: 281, 282 , 6:165: where the meaning of law of nature is made explicit.

About the results of deeds, it is generally believed that consequences will only occur in the life Hereafter; this is a wrong notion; the results of deeds start to be compiled along with the commitment of the deeds, and then some results appear in this very life and some in the Hereafter; the Qur'an says In Surah 29 Verse 9:

8 And We have enjoined on man goodness to his parents. But if they contend with thee to associate (others) with Me, of which thou hast no knowledge, obey them not. To Me is your return, so I will inform you of what you did.^a

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْاِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهٖ حُسْنًا
وَ اِنْ جَاهَدَاكَ لِتُشْرِكَ بِيْ مَا لَيْسَ
لَكَ بِهٖ عِلْمٌ فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَاۗ اِلَىٰ مَرْجِعِكُمْ
فَاُنۢبِئِكُمْ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ۝

which is taken to mean: you have to return to Me; then I will let you know about your deeds. It really does not mean that when a man “is before Allah after dying, the results of his deeds will appear before him; it means that all the deeds of man circle around the Laws of nature (are constantly in touch with the Laws of Allah); all results are formulated according to them; one cannot remain outside the purview of His law: and the results come before one according to this Law. The Nabi Muhammad AS himself was told in Surah 40 Verse 78:

77 Therefore be patient, surely the promise of Allāh is true. But whether We make thee see part of what We threaten them with, or cause thee to die, to Us shall they be returned.^a

فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ قَالِمًا
شَرِيكَكَ بَعْضَ الَّذِي نَعِدُهُمْ أَوْ
تَتَوَقَّيْتَهُ قَالَيْنَا يُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٧٧﴾

“Some of the punishment which is promised to the opponents of Allah’s Law may be experienced in this world (before death); and it may also possibly be after death; but sooner or later, their deeds will be subject to the Law of Allah; they cannot go out of its purview: (fa ailaina yurjaoon); But those results which do not appear in this world, will appear in the Hereafter: it has been stated that even after death one will return towards the consequences of the Law of Allah i.e. do not think that now that one is dead, nobody has a grip on one’s consequences or one is not accountable to anyone: all persons (Nafs) are ruled by the Law of Allah even after death and there is no escape from the concept of Mukafat-e-Amal of the Law.”

At certain places in the Quran the word ‘Ruj’u’, رَجُوع , **appear** to mean as we commonly use it in our daily lives and usage, e.g. In Surah 36 Verse 31:

31 See they not how many generations We destroyed before them, that they return not to them?^a

رَسُولٍ إِلَّا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ ﴿٣١﴾
أَلَمْ يَرَوْا كَمَا أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ مِمَّنْ
أَتَّخَذُوا مِنْهُمْ أَتْلُفًا لَا يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٣١﴾

These people do not رَجُوع , Ruj’u (Refer or turn towards) to the Messages and teaching of their Nabi AS. In the light of all these clarifications, اِنَّا اِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ would, in the light of the Quran, mean that in the establishment of God’s system there are numerous difficulties; so much so that one may have to lay down one’s life to establish this law as stated in the Verse before the above Verse states:

155 And We shall certainly try you with something of fear and hunger and loss of property and lives and fruits. And give good news to the patient,^a

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ
وَتَقْصِصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالْعِمْرَاتِ
وَبَشِيرِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٥٥﴾

After this, the group of Momineen are told that they too will face various hardships and will face the fear of oppression, hunger, loss of life and property and also that of loss of food (fruit) and people, and then the first part of Verse 156 states, followed up by the good news of Verse 157

157 Those are they on whom are blessings and mercy from their Lord; and those are the followers of the right course.

أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ
وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ ﴿١٥٧﴾

The entire life of a Momin is not or should not be ruffled by these challenges but be dedicated to establishing Allah’s system and programme as they turn to Allah’s Laws to be able to meet these challenges.

After that, it is said, “Oolaika alihim Salatun min Rabbihim wa Rahmatun wa Oolaika humul Muhtadoon: Surah Verse 157 “These are the people who are congratulated by Allah; and these are the people who are on the right path, اُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ , “oolaika humul muhtadoon” is itself expostulating,

إِنَّا إِلَهِهِ رَاجِعُونَ, inna ilahi ra'jeoon.

These Ayaat of the Qur'an make it clear that "inna ilahi raa'jeoon" does not mean that Allah is at any particular place and that after death man will return to that place to meet Him. Neither that the "soul of man" (incorrect interpretation of Rooh; that man does not have but has a personality) is a part of that whole (Allah) and will ultimately reunite with that whole: instead it means that our entire life is dedicated to Allah's system and programme; and despite all the difficulties and travails in this world, our steps move towards this very system; the Laws of Allah give us strength and the results of our deeds are formulated according to them; every move of our lives moves around this axis; it is the centre of our life; all our efforts are aimed towards this centre; every deed of ours moves towards the natural cycle of events; and it cannot be and should not be detracted; it has to produce the result (not Taqdeer of Humans), whether this result is experienced in this world or in the Hereafter; because His laws are not confined to this world only.

Lastly, a brief explanation of **لِ** is needed. The preposition, **لِ**, "li", by no stretch of one's imagination means "from" as for this Arabic uses **لِ** "li", briefly, means for; on behalf of; in favour of; to; because of; for the sake of; due to; owing to; for the purpose of; at the time of; but NOT "from". It is rather unfortunate that speakers in Masajid fall for the trick of common usage and try and appease and please the crowd rather than placing the Truth of the Quran before them.

Thus **إِنَّا إِلَهِهِ** does not mean that "we are from Allah" (refer above for explanation of **Emanation**) but that "those who remain steadfast and do not waver in their commitment to establish *Allah's* System".

May Allah Grant us all the steadfastness and the knowledge of the Quran to be Truthful when we address people with the Message of Allah.

Jazakallah.

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Credits:

Lughat-ul-Quran - Urdu

Translation of Quran by Muhammad Ali

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Various Encyclopaedias including Wikipedia & Britannica

History of the Intellectual Development of Europe by Draper