



ABŪ ESHĀQ NAZZĀM

ABŪ ESHĀQ EBRĀHĪM B. SAYYĀR B. HĀNE' AL-NAZZĀM (ca. 165-221/782-836), famous *adīb* and Mu'tazilite theologian. He was of lowly birth; one of his ancestors had been a slave. He was by the most reliable accounts (e.g., Ebn Ḥazm, *Ketāb al-feṣal fi'l-melal wa'l-ahwā' wa'l-neḥal*, Cairo, 1317/1899-1900, IV, p. 193.13f.) a *mawlā* of the Banū Boḡayr b. al-Ḥāreṭ, i.e., the descendants of Boḡayr b. Ḥāreṭ b. 'Obād al-Ḍobā'ī, who was killed during the war of Basūs between Bakr b. Wā'el and Taḡleb b. Wā'el (see, e.g., *Aḡānī*³ V, p. 46.2ff., and Ebn Ḥazm, *Jamharat ansāb al-'arab*, Cairo, 1948, pp. 305.2f., 320.11ff.). During his youth he lived in Baṣra in poverty (Jāḥeẓ, *Ketāb al-ḥayawān*, Cairo, 1938-45, III, p. 451.5ff.). He seems to have worked for the Zīādīyūn, the influential descendants of Zīād b. Abīh who kept an open house for intellectuals, among them the grammarian Qoṭrob (d. 206/821), who became one of Nazzām's followers (Jāḥeẓ, *al-Bayān wa'l-tabyīn*, Cairo, 1960-61, III, p. 214.13ff.; II, pp. 330.10ff., etc.). He followed the lectures of his maternal uncle Abu'l-Hoḍayl (q.v.), leader of the Basran branch of the Mo'tazela at that time. His astounding precocity became legendary, but his famous performance in front of the grammarian Ḳalīl b. Aḥmad (d. 175/791 at the latest) seems fabricated from older stories connected with Abū 'Obayda (d. 209/824-25; cf. Jāḥeẓ, *Ḥayawān* III, p. 471.3ff. and VII, p. 165.13ff., against Šarīf al-Mortaẓā, *Amālī* I, Cairo, 1954, p. 189.1ff., and Ebn al-Mortaẓā, *Ṭabaqāt*, Cairo, 1954/Beirut, 1380/1961, p. 51.3ff.). His glib refutation of Aristotle in the presence of the Barmakid Ja'far b. Yaḥyā (executed in 187/803), however, reveals only premature self-confidence (cf. Qāzī 'Abd-al-Jabbār, *Faẓl al-e'tezāl*, ed. F. Sayyed, Tunis, 1974, p. 264.16ff.; and Jāḥeẓ's judgment about his



personality in *Ḥayawān* II, p. 229.10ff.).

Gifted with the ability to apply his all-round education in concise formulations, Nazzām entered Basran bourgeois circles. The homosexuality and passion for drinking of which he was accused by Abū Nowās (*Dīvān*, ed. E. Wagner, Wiesbaden, 1958-72, II, p. 60.4ff.) apparently did not impede his career. Later he moved to Baghdad, where Ma'mūn attracted him to his court (after 204/819) and showed appreciation of his elegant style (see the anecdote in *Aḡānī*³ XXI, p. 80.6ff.). He received a large stipend from the government, but he managed to remain uncorrupted by his new wealth (cf. Ḥoşrī, *Zahr al-ādāb*, Cairo, 1372/1953, p. 523.16ff.). The unusually large number of his disciples remained proverbial among the Mu'tazilites up to the time of Abū Hāšem (d. 321/933; cf. *Faḏl al-e'tezāl*, p. 324.1f.). His prestige went far beyond his own school. Ebn Nobāta's claim that he died at the age of thirty-six (*Şarḥ al-'oyūn*, Cairo, 1964, p. 229.15f.) seems to go back to a calculation by Ebn 'Aqīl (cf. Ebn Mofleḥ, *al-Ādāb al-şar'īya*, Cairo, 1930, II, p. 119.-6ff.) and is certainly wrong. Ebn Ḥajar's remark that he was illiterate (*ommi*; *Lesān al-mīzān* I, p. 67.14ff.) is based on a misunderstanding of a passage in Qāzī 'Abd-al-Jabbār (*Faḏl al-e'tezāl*, p. 264.11, where apparently Nazzām's outstanding memory is praised) and is unconvincing in view of the thirty-nine titles of books registered in *Fehrest*.

It seems that Nazzām owed his reputation at least as much to his poetry and wit as to his theological ideas. His poems were not numerous (cf. Ebn al-Mo'tazz, *Ṭabaqāt al-šo'arā'*, Cairo, 1956, p. 273.2), and only about fifty verses are preserved in later *adab* literature. But they were of high quality, distinctively "modern" in outlook and form, and similar to the poetry of Abū Nowās, whom he admired (Abu'l-Barakāt Anbārī, *Nozhat al-alebbā' fī ṭabaqāt al-odabā'*, ed. Ebrāhīm, Cairo, 1386/1967, p. 78.7ff.). He excelled in celebrating wine and the ethereal beauty of youths, but he also wrote panegyrics of caliphs, viziers and other influential personalities; of these nothing seems to have survived (cf. Ebn al-Mo'tazz, *Ṭabaqāt*, p. 440.8). His style combined an imaginative use of metaphors with a certain intellectual touch which introduced abstract notions taken from theology. In addition he was esteemed for his elegant prose style, rich in aphorisms with the succinctness of proverbs, and in *saĵ'* (rhyming prose), synonyms, and other rhetorical devices. Examples are preserved mainly by Jāḥeẓ and Abū Ḥayyān Tawḥīdī. He took part in the popular debating tournaments on arbitrary subjects (e.g., see his contribution to the comparison between the cock and the dog in Jāḥeẓ,



Ḥayawān II, p. 153.5ff.). Sahl b. Hārūn (d. 215/830) felt inspired by remarks of Naẓẓām and of a certain Šaddād al-Ḥāreṭī to compose a *monāẓara* between gold and glass (Ebn Nobāta, *Šarḥ*, p. 246.11f. and Ḥamza Ešfahānī, *al-Dorrat al-fākera fi'l-amṭāl al-sā'era*, Cairo, 1971-72, p. 393.2ff.). Naẓẓām was interested in Greek philosophy, as well as in the Iranian religious tradition (see Jāḥeẓ, *al-Boršān wa'l-orjān*, Cairo, 1972, p. 255.5ff.); he seems to have known Persian (Jāḥeẓ, *Ḥayawān* III, p. 451, bottom).

In theology Naẓẓām's brilliance apparently outweighed his moral commitment, quite in contrast to his contemporary Abū Mūsā Mordār (q.v.). Ebn al-Rēwandī (Ebn Rāwandī, q.v.), in an undoubtedly malicious account, could accuse him of having composed a book on the superiority of the concept of the trinity to monotheism for a Christian youth with whom he had fallen in love (Ebn Ḥazm, *Ṭawq al-ḥamāma*, Cairo, 1369/1950, p. 130.14ff.). He strongly disliked the Sufis, mainly because of their contempt for business and their abuse of the term *fi sabīl Allāh* (Ebn al-Mo'tazz, *Ṭabaqāt*, p. 440.8ff.). Even more than his teacher Abu'l-Ḥoḍayl, he broadened the epistemological and scientific basis of theology. Among the thirty-nine titles listed by Ebn al-Nadīm, all, with the possible exception of one (no. 32, the *Ketāb al-'arūs*), belong to *kalām*; and roughly half of them deal with issues of prolegomena and questions of subtle detail (*daqīq*). All of them are lost, and only a few are known to us through citations: 1. *Ketāb al-naḵṭ* (no. 19; see J. van Ess, *Das Kitāb an-Naḵṭ des Naẓẓām und seine Rezeption im Kitāb al-Futyā des Ġāḥiẓ*, *Abh. Ak. Wiss. Göttingen, Phil.-Hist. Kl.* 3/79, Göttingen, 1972). 2. *Ketāb al-ṭaḫḫira* (no. 22; fragments in Jovaynī, *Šāmel fi oṣūl al-dīn*, ed. 'A. S. al-Naššār, I, Alexandria, 1969, pp. 144.14ff., 145.14ff., 434.9ff., 436.4 from bottom and ff., 439.2ff., 441.8ff.). 3. *Ketāb al-joz'* (no. 20; excerpt in Aš'arī, *Maqālāt*, Wiesbaden, 1963, pp. 316f.). 5. Possibly the *Ketāb al-radd 'alā aṣḥāb al-eṭnayn* (no. 5; cf. Qāẓī 'Abd-al-Jabbār, *Mog̃nī* IV, p. 271.6ff., and the frequent references to the antidualistic arguments in Abu'l-Ḥosayn Ḳayyāṭ's *Ketāb al-entešār*, Beirut, 1957). Other pieces include a long passage containing a criticism of the pretensions of the *Aṣḥāb al-ḥadīṭ* (*Der Orient in der Forschung, Festschrift für O. Spies*, Wiesbaden, 1967, pp. 170ff.), an extensive criticism of Žerār b. 'Amr's physics (in Jāḥeẓ, *Ḥayawān* V, pp. 6ff., partly tr. in *Der Islam* 43, 1967, pp. 241ff.), and fragments from a work on the arbitration of Šeffīn (quoted by Jāḥeẓ in his *Resāla al-ḥakamayn*; see *Mašreq* 52, 1958, pp. 432.11ff., 433.8ff., and 434.11ff.). A treatise on the macrocosm and another on the microcosm, of which only the titles are preserved (nos. 25 and 26), may betray an interest in Hellenistic ideas unusual among the *motakallemūn*. (cf. Ebn al-Rēwandī's derogatory remark in Ḳayyāṭ, *Entešār*, p.



123.5). Only one of all these books can be dated. His *Ketāb al-ḥarakāt* (no. 30) must have been written at the time of Amīn (193-98/809-13), if it was indeed inspired by a verse of Abū Nowās written in that period (E. Wagner, *Abū Nuwās*, Wiesbaden, 1965, p. 116).

Inner-Islamic polemics among Nazzām’s works are few: two books against the Morje’a and the Moǰbera (nos. 39 and 12) and a refutation of Mo’ammar’s *ma’anī* theory (no. 21), which he seems to have especially disliked (cf. the remark in a story preserved in *Aḡānī*³ VIII, p. 249.6f.). It is true that he engaged in numerous debates: with the “Murji’ite” Abū Šamer (Jāḥeẓ, *Bayān* I, p. 91.10ff., etc.); with the predestinarian Naǰǰār (*Fehrest*, Tehran², p. 229.10ff. Maṛ’ašī al-Šoštari, *Eḥqāq al-ḥaqq*, Tehran, 1958-64, I, p. 76.18ff.); with the Shi’ites Mo’men (Šayṭān) al-Ṭāq and ‘Alī b. Mīṭam (Ebn Ḥazm, *Feṣal* IV, p. 181.19ff.) and, above all, Hešām b. al-Ḥakam (Maqdesī, *Bad’* II, p. 123.4ff.; and Kešši, *Rejāl*, Karbalā, 1963, p. 234.6ff.); with the Mu’tazilites Mo’ammar (*Fehrest* [Tehran], p. 207.16) and Abu’l-Hoḍayl. But these disputes did not necessarily affect personal relations. We hear of a picnic with Abū Šamer and ‘Alī b. Mīṭam (where Jāḥeẓ had to supply the food; *Ta’rīk Baḡdād* VI, p. 98.7ff.). The theologian who attacked him most was his own uncle, Abu’l-Hoḍayl (who wrote seven or eight books against him which are mentioned by Ebn al-Nadīm and by Baḡdādī in his *al-Farq bayn al-feraq*). Much of Nazzām’s energy was absorbed by the defense of Islam against the religions in its environment. He debated with the Christian Job of Edessa (Ayyūb al-Rohāwī), who refers to him anonymously in his *Book of Treasures* (ed. and tr. A. Mingana, Cambridge, 1935, p. 154ff.); with the Jew Manasse b. Šāleḥ (see the “minutes” of the disputation, ed. by L. Cheikho, *Vingt traités*, pp. 68f.; and by A. S. Tritton, “ ” Debate” between a Muslim and a Jew,” *Islamic Studies* I, no. 2, 1962, pp. 60ff.); and especially with the dualists and proponents of the eternity of the world (*dahrīya*). In the refutation of the latter he used arguments invented by John Philoponus and taken over partly by his younger contemporary Kendī and later on by Ġazālī in his *Tahāfot al-falāsefa* (cf. H. A. Davidson, *JAOS* 89, 1969, pp. 373ff.; and A. L. Ivry, *Al-Kindī’s Metaphysics*, Albany, 1974, index, s.v. Nazzām).

Nazzām’s “system” still awaits reconstruction. Moreover, we need deeper insight into the ideas of his predecessors and contemporaries in early *kalām* in order to define his special contribution. He disagreed sharply with Abu’l-Hoḍayl’s theories of physics. Abu’l-Hoḍayl was an atomist. For him substances were aggregates of juxtaposed, isolated elements which are permanently held



together by God's omnipotence; their qualities are accidents which may, in case of change, be replaced by their contraries. Naẓẓām believed that God created everything at once, the elements not juxtaposed, but inside (*komūn*) and permeating each other (*tadākol*). Change is not the effect of God's immediate intervention or of a replacement of accidents, but rather the dissolution of a given mixture of "bodies." Change does not necessarily mean that one quality is abruptly replaced by another; it may be slow and imperceptible. A lamp, which consists of a wick burning in oil, is different every moment, because the oil and the wick have diminished; but we perceive the change only in the morning when the oil is gone and the wick is black (cf. J. van Ess, *Erkenntnislehre des 'Aḡudaddīn al-Īcī*, Wiesbaden, 1965, pp. 180ff.; *Der Islam* 43, 1967, pp. 241ff.). The mixture of a body is held together by a "balance of power": wood contains "hidden" fire, but this fire is restrained through the water which is also hidden in it. Only if somebody adds fire from outside is the equilibrium broken, and the hidden ingredients then become manifest—in this case, fire, water, smoke, and ashes. These in turn need not be simple (*mofrad*), but may be composite (*mozdaweġ*). Fire is made up of heat and light, ashes of taste, color, and dryness. Even these are not mere qualities, but "bodies;" "body" is everything which is created by God and which cannot be reproduced by man. Only movement is an "accident;" it is interpreted in a very broad sense as "all actions depending on man's will: praying and fasting, acts of willing, knowing and ignorance, speech and silence, etc." (cf. Aš'arī, *Maqālāt*, Wiesbaden, 1963, p. 403.14f.). Things thus do not have accidents as long as they do not enter into contact with man.

This issue was frequently misunderstood. Since no "movement" was involved in change, the doxographers could say, with reference to such examples as the lamp, that bodies are "created" anew every moment (cf. Aš'arī, *Maqālāt*, p. 404.11, etc.). They neglected to add that this is only true for the moments of change (contrast, *Moġnī* XI, pp. 452.15ff.); thus their formulation suggested an atomist context. Job of Edessa tried to grasp the theory in Aristotelian terms. In reality Naẓẓām took his ideas from the Shi'ite theologian Hešām b. al-Ḥakam and from Manicheism. Hešām b. al-Ḥakam seems to have been influenced by Abū Šāker Dayšānī, a convert to Islam and former adherent of a rather obscure school of thought which claimed to continue the intellectual tradition of the gnostic Bardesanes; through this lineage some concepts found in Naẓẓām may be traced back to Stoicism (*modākala*, i.e., *krasis di holou*; "body," i.e., *sōma*; cf. *Der Islam* 53, 1967, pp. 251, 257ff.). Naẓẓām adopted as far as possible the Manichean concept of the world as a mixture of opposites (Mid.



Pers. *gumēčīšn* or *gumēčagīh*, i.e., of light and darkness) in order to refute his Manichean opponents on their own grounds. Ebn al-Rēwandī never fails to point to this affinity to heretics (cf. Ḳayyāṭ, *Enteṣār*, sec. 18, 22, etc.). But Naẓẓām was quite clear about the difference. The Manicheans must admit that light and darkness can only act according to their physical natures; as these are opposites, their mixture remains unexplained. The Muslims, however, believed in a God who is beyond these opposites and brings them together (cf. *ibid.*, sec. 28). The incontestable fact of opposites existing together in the phenomena of this world, e.g., fire and water in wood, which could not be denied by the Manicheans, thus turns out to be a proof for the existence of a creator acting by his own free decision (*ibid.*, sec. 26; cf. H. A. Davidson, “John Philoponus as a Source of Medieval Islamic and Jewish Proofs of Creation,” *JAOS* 89, 1969, pp. 373f. with parallels from John of Damascus and Athanasius).

Naẓẓām substantiated his rejection of atomism by pointing to the weakness of this model (cf. Jovaynī, *Šāmel* I, pp. 487.5ff., 438.3ff.). He realized, however, that his own doctrine of infinite partition bore consequences for the theory of motion. According to atomism, motion meant that during a finite number of moments the moving body, regardless of its speed, is opposite to, i.e., in immediate contact with, a corresponding finite number of places, which are identical with the atoms of the underlying body. Infinite partition of the underlying body thus seemed to lead to the infinite duration of movement. Abu'l-Hoḍayl illustrated this with an example which reminds us of a Zenonic paradox: An ant would never reach the end of a sandal (cf. Qāzī 'Abd-al-Jabbār, *Faẓl al-e'tezāl*, p. 263.11ff.). In opposition to this, Naẓẓām stressed the fact that an ant which follows the diagonal of a square arrives earlier than another one which follows the two sides. This can only be explained by the assumption that the first ant “jumped” over some places (cf. *Šāmel*, p. 439.2ff.). The proof presupposes that, according to the atomists, the diagonal has the same number of “places” as the two sides together (cf. Abū Rašīd Nīsābūrī in A. Biram, *Die atomische Substanzlehre aus dem Buch der Streitfragen zwischen Basrensern und Bagdadensern*, Berlin, 1902, p. 80). If, however, a “leap” must be assumed here, it can be assumed everywhere. This was the famous theory of *ṭafra* (“the leap”) which has confused most later observers. Naẓẓām supported it with further examples, e.g., superimposed motions in the same or different direction (cf. the famous example of two ropes in a well, *Šāmel*, pp. 145.14ff., 441.8ff., 434.9ff.) and corresponding motions of different points in the same object (*ibid.*, p. 436.19ff., in a millstone; Aš'arī, *Maqālāt*, p. 321.7ff., in a spinning top). He considered rest only a special case of motion; to call it rest



is a *façon de dire* (cf. *Maqālāt*, pp. 324.12ff., 346.13ff.). The *tafra* theory needs further research; Hešām b. al-Ḥakam already used the term (see *EI*² III, pp. 496-98), and there are comparable ideas in Greek philosophy (cf. Damascius [6th century A.D.], *Perī archōn*, sec. 395, ed. A. Ruelle, Paris, 1889; S. van den Bergh, *Die Epitome der Metaphysik des Averroes übersetzt*, Leiden, 1924, p. 189, no. 1; idem, *Averroes' Tahāfut al-Tahāfut*, London, 1954, II, p. 30, n. 39.5; Ivry, *Al-Kindī's Metaphysics*, p. 163).

Nazzām's "corporeism" affected his anthropology. The soul (*rūḥ*) is a "body" which permeates (*yodākel*) man entirely; man is therefore identical with it. It is not located somewhere, e.g., in the heart; it is life which is "interlaced" with all his limbs (cf. Qāzī 'Abd-al-Jabbār, *Mog̃nī* XI, pp. 339ff., with a long refutation; see M. Bernard, *Stud. Isl.* 39, 1974, pp. 40ff.). If a limb is cut off, e.g., a hand as punishment for theft, the soul withdraws into another limb. Thus the arm or hand may be thrown into hell, whereas the rest of the body is in paradise (cf. Maqdesī, *Bad'* II, p. 124.12ff.; Nāše', *al-Ketāb al-awsaṭ* in van Ess, *Frühe mu'tazilitische Häresiographie*, Beirut, 1971, sec. 160 and p. 135). As a body, the soul may be permeated by other bodies, e.g., senses. This explains affliction and trial in this world, where the soul, identical with man, is the subject of *taklīf*; but in the hereafter it enables man to enjoy the pleasures of paradise (cf. Kayyāt, *Enteṣār*, sec. 21). As a "mixture" of all senses, the soul is the seat of the *sensus communis*. The necessity of such a *sensus communis* may, in turn, be used as a proof against people like the early Mu'tazilite Žerār b. 'Amr, who believed that the soul is nothing by itself, but rather the result of the combination (*ta'līf*) of the accidents (*a'rāz*) which form a living body (cf. Nāše', op. cit., sec. 161 = pp. 133f.). Other psycho-physical phenomena were explained in a similar way: The evil eye is a result of "subtle bodies" which emanate from the eye and penetrate into somebody else (cf. R. Köbert, *Der Islam* 28, 1948, pp. 118f.). Speech is a subtle body which leaves the speaking person and mixes with the air. Through this mixture it is multiplied and reaches, in different particles, the sense of hearing and consequently the soul of the hearer (cf. Solaymān b. Nāṣer al-Anṣārī, commentary on Jovaynī's *Ketāb al-eršād elā qawāṭe' al-adella fī oṣūl al-e'teqād*, ms. Princeton, fols. 86b-7ff.; shorter: Šahrastānī, *Nehāyat al-eqdām*, ed. A. Guillaume, London, 1934, p. 318.3ff., tr. G. Vajda in *Revue des études juives* 106, 1945, p. 78; also M. Bernard in *Stud. Isl.* 39, 1974, pp. 32f.).

Like life, capability (*esteṭā'a*) is not an accident separate from man, but part of his essence (cf. Aš'arī, *Maqālāt*, p. 229.3f.). Actions are accidents, movements



which take place in his sphere (*ḥayyez*). If they have secondary effects beyond this sphere, like the “generated” actions (*motawalledāt*), then these effects are created by God, but in accordance with the inherent necessity of the nature of the affected object (*fe’l Allāh be-ījāb al-keḷqa*). Thus a stone thrown by man moves according to its nature, the throwing being man’s action and the motion God’s action (cf. *Maqālāt*, p. 404.4ff.). This is also true for perception; man uses his senses, while perception (*edrāk*) is created by God in accordance with the nature of the senses (cf. van Ess, *Erkenntnislehre*, p. 169). In contrast to capability, the power to perform an individual action (*qodra*) is not permanently inherent in man. In its relation to one specific *maqdūr*, it is present only before the action, whereas it is absent during it; because then the *maqdūr* is already realized (cf. *Maqālāt*, pp. 229.7f., 234.4ff.). In order to merit divine reward, actions have to be done in conscious worship of God, except during the respite (*mohla*), the period when man, immediately after his mental maturity, begins contemplating God. Nazzām took over this idea from Abu’l-Ḥodayl, who had, however, applied it in a broader sense to all unbelievers who do not yet have sufficient knowledge of God (cf. *Enteşār*, sec. 47; van Ess, *Erkenntnislehre*, pp. 349f.).

Knowledge, being an accident, has no permanence; in every moment it has to be renewed through the recollection of the proof (cf. *Moğnī* XII, p. 136.3ff.). Man may acquire knowledge through thinking; or he may have it by necessity (*eżterār*), either through his five senses or through the insight that information he gets (in itself only speech permeating the air) is true, or by intuiting what is meant when being addressed by somebody. (See text in *Maşreq* 69, 1969, p. 318.16ff., tr. C. Pellat in *Arabische Geisteswelt*, Zurich, 1967, p. 55; tr. M. Bernard in *Stud. Isl.* 39, 1974, p. 27f.). In connection with the last two cases, Nazzām advocated a subjective criterion of truth, tranquility of the heart (*sokūn al-qalb*), i.e., inner certitude (text, p. 320.10f.). Through an exegesis of Sūra 63:1 he showed that one can utter the objective truth without being truthful (cf. van Ess, *Erkenntnislehre*, p. 71). His followers appealed also to the *esteşhād al-zarūrāt*, “invoking the testimony of a priori cognitions;” but this is perhaps a later development (cf. text, pp. 320.17f., 321.12). The truth is, however, completely independent of the person pronouncing it, except in the case of the *şahāda*, which can only be subjectively true if pronounced by a believer (cf. *Enteşār*, sec. 32). Nazzām applied this equally to Hadith and the principles of law. An isolated tradition (*kaḅar al-wāḥed*) may well be true, while a tradition with multiple attestations (*motawāter*) may be false, depending upon external criteria (cf. *Moğnī* XV, p. 392.4ff.; van Ess in *Der*



Orient in der Forschung, pp. 184f.). An *ej̄mā'* of one person may be true if this person can adduce logical support, whereas the *ej̄mā'* of the Companions was usually wrong, as is shown by their contradictory statements on specific juridical problems. Their *fatwās* were based, not on logical deductions, but on subjective arguments; they may even have deviated in order to gain personal prestige. In following them the whole community could succumb to error. Nothing like that is possible with respect to controllable cognizance, such as sense perceptions. This sharp criticism of the *ṣaḥāba*, shocking to the Sunnites, was appreciated by the Shi'ites. Naẓẓām, however, by no means excluded 'Alī (cf. J. van Ess, *Kitāb an-Nakṭ des Naẓẓām*, Göttingen, 1972, passim, especially pp. 111ff., 131ff.). He pleaded for a free *ej̄tehād* on a logical basis; several independent *fatwās* of his are reported by the later hostile tradition (cf. *Der Orient in der Forschung*, pp. 192ff.).

Naẓẓām's concept of God manifests his preoccupation with anti-Manichean polemics. He refined the proof of God's unity (cf. *Moḡnī* IV, p. 271.6ff.). In opposition to the dualists, he maintained that the same agent may produce good and bad deeds. He made the argument on the basis of the sophism of the mendacious Cretan (*pseudómenos*) and the phenomenon of repentance (cf. *Enteṣār*, sec. 17, and G. Monnot, *Penseurs musulmans et religions iraniennes*, Paris, 1974, pp. 299ff.). Concerning God's attributes he advocated a *via negativa* even more rigorous than Abu'l-Hoḍayl's; only to omniscience and omnipotence he conceded a certain positive value, because they are explicitly mentioned in the Qur'ān (cf. O. Pretzl, *Die frühislamische Attributenlehre*, München, 1940, pp. 13ff.). He concentrated, however, on the two attributes most controversial in the discussion with the dualists: God's will and His power. As to God's will, he tried to preserve its immediate, undelayed efficiency (it is "identical" with His action) without compromising man's free decision. He therefore distinguished, through philological analysis, five different meanings of the word "will," three of which may be applied to God (cf. van Ess in *Mélanges de l'Université St. Joseph* 49, 1975, pp. 670f.). God's power can not have any relation to evil. God does not only avoid doing evil, He is not even capable of it (cf. Aš'arī, *Maqālāt*, p. 555.1ff.). This was an extreme position even among the Mu'tazilites; Naẓẓām was explicitly attacked by Abū Mūsā Mordār, who thought that, at least in theory, God's omnipotence should include the possibility to do injustice and evil (cf. the book title in *Fehrest*, Tehran², p. 207.10). Naẓẓām, however, claimed not to have encroached upon God's prerogatives; God is just and good, not of necessity, but by free choice (cf. *Enteṣār*, pp. 26.7, 39.10ff.), and His power still possesses unlimited



possibilities, the only restriction being that all of them would be equally good for man, a benefit (*loṭf*) of the same magnitude as the one realized in creation (cf. *Maqālāt*, p. 576.5ff.). God always does what is most fitting (*aşlah*), but there is an infinite number of alternatives. If He did something less than fitting, such as injustice, this would be a sign of imperfection (cf. *Enteşār*, p. 39.14f.; Brunschvig in *Stud. Isl.* 39, 1974, pp. 10f.). *Loṭf*, therefore, does not mean that He makes any exceptions in reward or punishment. Innocent children, whether of believers or unbelievers, enter paradise. It is the same with animals, regardless of their ferocity or meekness; they lose, however, their bodies, and their souls receive other bodies (cf. Jāḥeẓ, *Ḥayawān* III, p. 394.6ff.). Sins are done by man; God is only connected with them insofar as He defines them as such (cf. *Enteşār*, sec. 16, probably connected with the interpretation of the verb *ja'ala* as *ḥakama 'alā* in the relevant verses of the Qur'ān).

God's speech is fundamentally different from human speech; it is a "body" created by God and as such directly identical with the sound of the message heard by a prophet—in the case of Moḥammad, the Qur'ān. Since this body is permanently external to God, it can not be said that He is speaking (*motakallem*). Man, on the other hand, does speak, because his speech is an accident, a "movement." However, this movement is not identical with sound, but only characterized by sound. The recitation of the Qur'ān can therefore not be identical with the Qur'ān itself (cf. Aş'arī, *Maqālāt*, pp. 191.10ff., 587.15ff.; *Moḡnī* VII, p. 161.7ff.). The written copies of the Qur'ān are "word (speech) of God" only in a metaphorical sense (cf. *Enteşār*, p. 63.22ff.). The Qur'ān shows its divine origin by the prophecies (*eḵbār 'an al-ḡayb*) contained in it, not through its stylistic form. There is thus no *eĵāz* in the later sense of the word. The reason why Moḥammad's opponents did not produce anything similar to the Qur'ān was not due to a permanent rhetorical inferiority, but to a temporary inability created in them by God (cf. *Maqālāt*, p. 225.11ff.; *Enteşār*, sec. 15). The miracle of the Qur'ān was a historical one; it does not continue up to the present time.

In his political views Nazẓām tended to justify 'Alī's decisions during his caliphate (cf. Nawbaḳtī, *Feraq al-şī'a*, ed. H. Ritter, Istanbul, 1931, pp. 12.18ff., 14.10ff.). In his understanding of Abū Mūsā al-Aş'arī's role during the arbitration of Şeffīn, he showed sharp historical insight (cf. the quotation in Jāḥeẓ's *Resāla fī'l-ḥakamayn*, *Maşreq* 52, 1958, p. 432.11ff.). This together with his criticism of the *şaḥāba* was the occasion for some later Shi'ite authors to claim him for their cause (e.g., Mīr Ḥāmed Nīsābūrī, d. 1306/1888, in his



‘Abaqāt al-anwār fī emāmat al-a’emmat al-aṭhār, quoted by ‘Abbās Qomī, *al-Konā wa’l-alqāb*, Najaf, 1376/1956, III, p. 209.10ff.). But there is no more than the usual pro-‘Alid sympathy characteristic for the time of Ma’mūn. Naẓẓām did not restrict the caliphate to Qorayš, and a fortiori not to the house of the Prophet. In principal, he considered the caliphate superfluous as long as all people acted righteously; in other cases everybody is instinctively aware as to who is the Imam. Abū Bakr was the best choice after the death of the Prophet, because he was poor and did not have the support of an influential tribe, so that he could only have been elected in view of his religious qualities (cf. Nawbakṭī, p. 10.16f.). ‘Oṭmān committed some mistakes during the last six years of his government; but, as the reports about them contradict each other, it is best to suspend judgement (cf. Nāṣe’, *Oṣūl al-neḥal*, ed. van Ess in *Frühe mu’tazilitische Häresiographie*, sec. 88).

Because of its rational simplicity and its strong philosophical and scientific basis, Naẓẓām’s system proved attractive far beyond the circles of the Mo’tazela. Some of his followers were so-called “Murji’ites,” i.e., people who did not agree with the Mu’tazilite belief in eternal punishment for a grave sinner; others, including Faẓl al-Ḥadaṭī, Aḥmad b. Ḥābeṭ and Aḥmad b. Ayyūb b. Mānūs, advanced the doctrine of metem-psychosis (which they may have derived from Naẓẓām’s concept of *rūḥ*) and were excluded from the school. Some of his ideas were taken over by the Baghdad branch of the Mo’tazela. Certain followers of Naẓẓām defended his doctrine of infinite partition at the court of Šāḥeb b. ‘Abbād (q.v.; d. 385/995; cf. M. ‘A. Abū Rīda, *Ebrāhīm b. Sayyār al-Naẓẓām*, Cairo, 1365/1946, p. 129, no. 1). Imamite theologians such as Shaikh al-Mofīd (d. 413/1022) and Šarīf al-Mortaẓā (d. 436/1044) still defended the theory that the opponents of the Prophet were miraculously “turned away” from producing anything equal to the Qur’ān (Mofīd in his *Awā’el al-maqālāt*, tr. D. Sourdel in *REI* 40, 1972, p. 271, sec. 32; Mortaẓā in his *Ketāb al-mūzeḥ* and other writings, e.g., ms. Princeton, ELS 2751, fol. 140b.18ff.; the term *ṣarf(a)* used by Mortaẓā and by the heresiographers was perhaps introduced only after Naẓẓām). On the other hand, criticism from inside and outside the Mo’tazela was already violent during the lifetime of his pupil Jāḥeẓ. The strength of the reactions reflects his undeniable originality.



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