



FOWAṬĪ, HEŠĀM

FOWAṬĪ, HEŠĀM b. 'AMR (d. Baghdad, probably before 230/845), Mu'tazilite theologian of Basran affiliation and student of Abu'l-Hoḍayl (q.v.). In contrast to most of his schoolfellows, he was of pure Arab extraction, belonging to the tribe of Banū Šaybān. [Nonetheless, his biography is included because of Mu'tazilite influence on Shi'ite theology—*EIr.*] He seems to have been a merchant dealing with *fūṭa* cloths imported from India. He traveled extensively by both land and sea, and he corresponded with adherents in Khorasan (Ebn al-Nadīm, ed. Tajaddod, p. 214). This gave him the opportunity to visit Mu'tazilite communities outside Iraq; he pleaded for self-administration and even self-justice (esp. in the case of apostasy) when the government was unable to act by itself, mainly in remote areas (Ḳayyāṭ, p. 51, ll. 8 ff.). Critical opponents like Ebn Rāvandī (q.v.) interpreted this attitude as a summons to deliberate assassination (*ibid.*), but it is primarily to be understood as a radical application of the Mu'tazilite doctrine of *amr be'l-ma'rūf* (q.v.).

Fowaṭī wrote on the major theological questions: the concept of God (*Ketāb al-tawḥīd*), free will (*Ketāb al-maḳlūq*), createdness of the Qur'ān (*Ketāb ḳalq al-Qor'ān*), and the five Mu'tazilite principles (*Ketāb al-oṣūl al-ḳams* [sic], the first treatise known to have borne this title; Ebn al-Nadīm, ed. Tajaddod, p. 214). He became well known through polemics against Basran theological models of the past, namely Abū Bakr Ašamm, the Bakrīya, and Abu'l-Hoḍayl 'Allāf. In these latter books he may have dealt merely with questions of detail, for he agreed with Abu'l-Hoḍayl, who was his main teacher, on a number of points. As usual,



however, the sources reveal more about the differences. Fowaṭī attacked Abu'l-Hoḍayl because of his doctrine that at a certain moment all movement in paradise will cease, replaced by a state of eternal consummation (van Ess, in *EIr.* I, p. 321). He obviously no longer shared his teacher's conviction, based on the Qur'ān, that the creation had come about through the divine command *kon* (Be!). This opposition led him to the problem of how to distinguish the re-creation before the Last Judgment (*e'āda* "repetition," which, according to Abu'l-Hoḍayl, would be effected by God's command *'od* "Be again!") from the "first" creation, given that the result in both moments would be the same. On the other hand, he accepted Abu'l-Hoḍayl's model of six atoms forming a coherent entity by marking the different directions (in contrast to Mo'ammar b. 'Abbād's cubic model, which presupposed eight atoms), but he did not believe that these six atoms form a body. Rather, he considered them a preliminary element (*rokn*), a molecule as it were, and only when six of them, that is, thirty-six atoms, come together is corporeal consistency attained. In epistemology Fowaṭī used Abu'l-Hoḍayl's proof of God's existence from the accidental character of this fleeting world, but he added that accidents never occur without bodies ("substances") and that therefore only bodies can be the basis of such a proof. As a consequence, he had to admit that the Qur'ān, which Abu'l-Hoḍayl considered a mere accident (i.e., recitation, writing, etc.), could not be a proof of God. He did not yet believe in *e'jāz* (uniqueness) of the Qur'ān. He denied not only the inimitability of koranic language but also its exemplary character; certain koranic formulations that are open to misunderstanding (about predestination, etc.) may be used only in liturgical recitation but not in normal speech. In anthropology he seems rather to have followed Mo'ammar: The person, that is, the *principium individuationis*, is an atom by itself, forming part of the human body. He located it in the heart, as did his contemporary Abū 'Alī Oswārī, a disciple of Abū Eshāq Nazzām (q.v.).

A few of Fowaṭī's ideas were completely original. He seems not to have developed any explicit theory of divine attributes, but he thought that God does not know things before their existence because they are not yet "things." God only knows about Himself, as the only and ultimate Reality, which implies, however, that He is also aware that He is going to create entities that will be things when they exist. In his definition of belief Fowaṭī differentiated, obviously for the first time, between "belief in God" (*īmān be'llāh*), the act of faith properly speaking, and "belief for God's sake" (*īmān le'llāh*), works of faith by which God's will is accomplished. In political theory Fowaṭī first proposed an ecumenical interpretation of events at Medina before the murder



of ‘Oṭmān and later on at Baṣra during the Battle of the Camel: Both sides had the best intentions, but war broke out by accident, through the foolishness of subaltern elements who did not belong to the prominent Companions (*ṣaḥāba*). This was to say that the mutual accusations between Shi‘ites and Sunnis were groundless. Only when a community is united can it be guided by a sovereign responsible for all of them. Political controversies must be decided by *ejtehād* (q.v.).

Fowaṭī’s ideas were taken over and further developed by his disciple ‘Abbād b. Salmān/Solaymān (q.v.). As ‘Abbād’s attempt to influence Mu‘tazilīte theology ultimately failed, however, Fowaṭī’s new approaches were not generally taken up. Ebn al-Nadīm therefore counted him, together with ‘Abbād, Aṣamm, and others, among those who “brought up [undue] innovations and stood alone” (ed. Tajaddod, p. 214).

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