

4.1.3 *Shaḥḥām*

181557 SAHHÂM

In Ibn al-Nadīm's view Hishām al-Fuwaṭī and 'Abbād b. Sulaymān were Mu'tazilites who 'introduced innovations and seceded'.<sup>1</sup> This is probably a judgment with hindsight; by Ibn al-Nadīm's day, 'Abbād's forceful attempt at giving Basran thought a new foundation had long petered out. This was because Jubbā'ī, who would determine the general line of the Basran school for a long time, had not studied under 'Abbād but under his contemporary

Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf b. 'Abdallāh b. Ishāq al-Baṣrī, called al-Shaḥḥām.<sup>2</sup>

This was linked to the fact that Jubbā'ī was focussed more on Abū l-Hudhayl, as Shaḥḥām – unlike 'Abbād – had been Abū l-Hudhayl's assistant; 'Abd al-Jabbār even called him the latter's most competent pupil (*a'lamuhum*). This probably does not mean much;<sup>3</sup> it is one of those generalising judgments expressed at a later time that are often found in biographical literature. What we might most reasonably infer from it would be that he was most faithful to his master's work, but not even this is accurate, for like 'Abbād, Shaḥḥām believed that 'that which is not, is something' (*al-ma'dūm shay'*). Indeed, he went further than 'Abbād, according to the denotation 'body' even to those things that existed only within God's knowledge;<sup>4</sup> Khayyāṭ would later take the same step in Baghdad.<sup>5</sup> This seems to suggest that Shaḥḥām was dependent on 'Abbād; he certainly could not have found out about the problem from Abū l-Hudhayl but only from Hishām al-Fuwaṭī. Just how little original thought he expressed is shown by Ash'arī mentioning him much less often than 'Abbād. Posterity thought differently, regarding Shaḥḥām as the one who had introduced the dimension of potentiality into *kalām*.<sup>6</sup> However, this was in fact once again adopting Jubbā'ī's point of view: he had modified the theory and incorporated it into his own, and he had little interest in being seen as one of 'Abbād's followers.<sup>7</sup>

1 *Fihrist* 214, 1f.

2 Regarding his being Jubbā'ī's teacher cf. *Faḍl* 280, 13 > IM 72, 1f.

3 Not even if the editor's rather unusual reading of *akmaluhum* (*Faḍl* 280, 12) as opposed to *a'lamuhum* (Ḥākim al-Jushamī, and IM 82, 9; the latter quoting the *qāḍī* explicitly). Describing someone as the 'most perfect' of pupils was contrary to the usual phraseology and the reading is probably a result of the poor and illegible MS.

4 Text xxvi 1, a–c, and 2, a; more details below.

5 EI<sup>2</sup> IV 1163a.

6 Juwaynī, *Shāmil* 124, 6f.; Shahrastānī, *Nihāya* 151, 2f. (also Pretzl, *Attributenlehre* 60); Ibn Taymiyya, *Madhhab al-ittihādiyya*, in: *Majmū'a* (Cairo 1341) IV 6, 8ff.; also Text xxvi 3.

7 Text 3, a; he mainly diverged in the terminology, avoiding *shay'* with reference to that which did not exist (*Maq.* 162, 5ff. = 522, 9ff.). Regarding Jubbā'ī in more detail see Frank in: *Philosophies of Existence* 261 and 264.