

On perception, Hishām held that God “sees” by means of rays interpenetrating their objects. Hishām seems to have conflated contemporary theories of (human) vision by extramission with a more conceptual epistemology, whereby the reality of objects is perceived in the heart by means of acts of imagination and estimation (these were to be treated as faculties of the soul in the philosophy of Ibn Sīnā [Avicenna, d. 428/1037]; estimation, *wahm*, in particular, became a crucial faculty for the apprehension of non-sensible *ma'nās* in objects of knowledge). Thus, as van Ess noted (1:365–7), he anticipated the Greek-inspired optical theory of al-Kindī (d. c.252/870) and was apparently the first to articulate in Arabic some of the epistemological issues in facultative psychology, the dominant model of the following centuries. Although Hishām's ontology of subtle property-bodies and momentary *ṣifāt* was decidedly materialist, discounting abiding psychological realities, his anthropology skewed dualist: he is consistently reported to have asserted that the human body and the spirit (*rūḥ*) are two distinct conceptual entities (*ma'nā*). “The human body is inanimate, whereas the spirit is the agent and perceiver of things; it is a light among lights” (ʿAbd al-Jabbār, 11:310).

Hishām's claims regarding human and divine acts reflect many of the early technical concerns of the Muʿtazilīs. As a class, human and divine acts are *ṣifāt*, neither the same as nor different from the bodies with which they are associated. His analysis of acts emphasises the ambiguity inherent in the assertion of human choice; acts belong to their (human) agent, but are necessitated by virtue of God's having supplied an impetus (*sabab*, that is, an immediate cause; see al-Ashʿarī, 41–3).

It is not clear whether Hishām's theology determined his physical theory or vice versa, but he seems to have been the first Islamic thinker to thoroughly integrate the two. His positions were clearly influential in the development of Muʿtazilī thought, and at several points—for example, with respect to the apperception of the true nature of objects through mental faculties, and the definition of body as an existent, self-subsistent thing—that is, a substance—he could almost be considered a forerunner of Arabic Aristotelianism.

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Horoscope

A **horoscope** is a diagram of the positions of various elements considered astrologically significant on the celestial sphere. Horoscopes are calculated for a