

30 THE MOSLEM DOCTRINE OF GOD

tive. God is unique, as well as a unit, and has no relations to any creature that partake of resemblance. The statement in Genesis that man was created in the divine image is to the Moslem blasphemy. Allah is defined by a series of negations. As popular song has it—

“Whatsoever your mind can conceive,
That Allah is not you may well believe.”

Mohammed, outside of the Koran, was silent regarding the nature of God's being. “For while traditions have been handed down in abundance which give the responses of the Prophet to inquiries concerning prayer, almsgiving, fasting and pilgrimage there is not one having reference to the being [and attributes] of God. This is a fact acknowledged by all those most profoundly versed in Traditional lore.”¹ The great Imams are agreed regarding the danger and impiety of studying or discussing the nature of the being of God. They, therefore, when speaking of Allah's being, fall back on negations.

The idea of absolute sovereignty and ruthless omnipotence (borrowed, as we shall see, from the nature of Allah's attributes) are at the basis. For the rest his character is impersonal—that of an infinite, eternal, vast nomad. God is not a body. God is not a

¹*The Khalifs of Bagdad*, p. 136. I have put his words “and attributes” in brackets. Osborne's statement is too strong. There are traditions, although not many, on Allah's attributes.