

Chapter – 55

Sheikh Ibn al-Arabi

(1165 - 1240 AD)

His name is Mohiuddin. His father's name is 'Ali ibn Muhammad al-Arabi. He belongs to the Tai tribe and he is the descendants of Hatim Tai. He was born on 17 Ramazan 560AH/1165AD. He was born in Marisiya, Andalusia (*Spain*). He was about 8 years old when he moved from Marisiya to the city of Ishbilia, which was those days a great center of knowledge and literature. Here, for 30 years he studied under the guidance of famous scholars. At the age of 38 years, he first reached to Egypt, then traveled to different countries and finally settled in Damascus.

Sheikh Ibn Arabi is the author of numerous books. The subject of most of his writings is "Sufism". His most famous book on the subject of Sufism is "Fusoos al-Hikam". This book has many elucidations in Arabic. There have been several Persian and Urdu translations as well. Among the Urdu translators are Abdul Ghafoor Dosti, Maulvi Syed Mubarak Ali and Maulana Abdul Qadir Siddiqui. His "Al-Futoohat Al-Makkiyah" is available in four major volumes. "Tafseer-e-Sagheer" and "Tafseer-e-Kabir" were published in Egypt. His book "Naqsh-an-Nusoos" was translated by Maulana Jami. His writings also include:

، كتاب الجلاله ، كتاب تاج الرسائل ، عقيدته مختصره ،

مراتب الوجود ، مواقع النجوم

The compilation of his poetry is considered to be one of the classics in Arabic language, whose name is "Tarjuman al-Ashwaque". Besides this, there are many other writings of Sheikh which are spread all over the world.

People have conflicting views about the personality of Sheikh Ibn al-Arabi. Some people think that he was a perfect religious mentor. He was a "Qutub" of the whole world. He was an authority in علم باطنى (*the knowledge of secrets*). Many of his fans were also prominent scholars, who also wrote books in support of his beliefs. Among them are Al-Fakhr al-Razi and Al-Jalal al-Suyuti. On the other hand, there was also a group who thought that he is a kind of atheist or a free thinker. Among those scholars who criticized were az-Zahabi and Ibn Taymiyyah. A Similar contradiction is still found among the scholars regarding the writings of Ibn al-Arabi.

The principle on which all the mystical philosophy of Ibn al-Arabi is based, is the belief of "وحدت الوجود" (*to conceive all the existences as probable and merely nominal*). In his view all the universal objects are merely a shadow of the fact that lies behind it. This is the belief he expresses in his book named as "Al-Futoohat". In this he writes that, "The Almighty is the One who created all things and He Himself is the real essence of it. It means, the last basis of the essence of this real existence was:

"He was", "He is" and "He will be".

Here are some of the basic points of Sheikh Ibn al-Arabi's philosophy of Sufism.

- ❖ The "Self Existence" depends on Allah only. The rest of the things are subsidiaries.
- ❖ Existence as "ماه الوجود" is Allah alone. After that all are prepositional. Everything else is not even conjunctive either.

- ❖ It is said that caste and the attributes are different, but in fact they are infinite.
- ❖ The stages of God's Knowledge and Information are earlier than His Power and Intention. Means it is non-creatures.
- ❖ Before *كن* (*Be*), the stages are internal and divine. And after that, there are creatures and possibilities.
- ❖ On all possibilities, the Glorification of God exposes according to the individual's potential.

دیتا ہے ہر اک کو حکیم جس کی جیسی لیاقت ہے
وہی نمایاں ہوتا ہے جس کی جیسی فطرت ہے

- ❖ "اعیان" (*The notables*) and "حقائق" (*the facts*) cannot be questioned as to why they are so.
- ❖ Destiny is the system or program of what is going to happen in the Universe.
- ❖ The object has two aspects. One Personal, the other Attribute. Personal determination never changes by caste. While the Attribute determination changes due to attributes. But this changing does not affect the identity and the caste.

Besides "Ibn al-Arabi", Sheikh Mohiuddin is also known as "Al-Sheikh al-Akbar" (*The Great Sheikh*). He died at the age of approximately 75 years. His shrine is in Damascus, Syria.