

An Examination of the Personality Traits and Educational Teachings of “Sheikh Kabir” in the *Sirat-e Ibn Khafif* (by Abu al-Hasan Daylami, Translated by Junaid Shirazi)

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ABSTRACT

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This research is about educational teachings in the remaining work of the mystic of the 4th century of Hijri, namely “Sire Ibn Khafif”. The author has tried to investigate the educational teachings in the “Sire Ibn Khafif” and his works by using the descriptive and analytical method and using library sources. “Sire Ibn Khafif” was written in Arabic by his student, Abul Hasan Daylami, and written in Persian by Rukn al-Din Yahya bin Junid Shirazi, which has thirteen chapters, and each chapter is about a subject that has educational, moral and religious content. Due to the fact that he was a great mystic and Sufi, he was highly regarded and loved by the people of his time, to the point where they even gave him the title of Sheikh Kabir. According to the study, “Sire Ibn Khafif” paid special attention to performing religious duties such as prayer, fasting, reading the Qur'an, and also had moral virtues such as humility, charity, generosity, fairness, respecting the rights of fellow human beings, etc. It took effective steps in the path of mysticism and Sufism, such as austerity, sharia, monotheism, etc.

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Introduction

Persian literature has historically served as a profound repository for moral, educational, and mystical discourse. Works such as Saadi's *Gulistan* and the various biographies of Sufi masters function not only as historical accounts but as didactic texts designed to guide the soul toward ethical and spiritual perfection. One such significant work is the *Sirat-e Ibn Khafif* (The Biography of Sheikh Kabir), which chronicles the life and teachings of Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin Khafif bin Asfashadh, known as "Sheikh Kabir" (the Great Sheikh), a prominent 4th-century AH Sufi master and founder of the Khafifiya order in Shiraz. The original Arabic text, written by his devoted student Abu al-Hasan Daylami, was later translated into Persian by Rukn al-Din Yahya bin Junaid Shirazi. This research aims to analyze the educational, moral, and religious dimensions of Sheikh Kabir's life as presented in this narrative, positioning the work within the tradition of didactic and narrative Sufi literature.

Method

This study adopts a descriptive-analytical methodology. Utilizing library research and a close reading of the *Sirat-e Ibn Khafif*, the study examines the text as a form of "didactic narrative literature" (*adab-e ta'limi*). By analyzing the anecdotes and historical accounts contained within the text's thirteen chapters, the research identifies the fundamental religious and ethical principles that defined Sheikh Kabir's character and pedagogical influence, drawing connections between his practices and the broader framework of Islamic and Sufi ethics.

Results

The analysis of *Sirat-e Ibn Khafif* reveals a multifaceted educational and moral framework rooted in the Sheikh's life. The findings are categorized into two primary domains:

1. **Religious Teachings and Practices:** Sheikh Kabir's life was defined by strict adherence to the *Sharia* (religious law). Key religious teachings identified include:

- **Ritual Devotion:** Diligent performance of daily prayers, particularly in the mosque, and a lifelong commitment to fasting and Quranic recitation.
 - **Asceticism and Struggle:** Engaging in intense *riyazat* (spiritual discipline) and *jihad-e nafs* (struggle against the lower self/ego), including extreme asceticism to curb worldly desires.
 - **Foundational Beliefs:** Strong emphasis on *Tawhid* (the oneness of God), absolute reliance on faith (*iman*), and a profound state of *Reza* and *Taslim* (satisfaction and submission to the Divine Will).
 - **Socio-Religious Duty:** Frequent performance of Hajj, viewing it as a core component of spiritual elevation.
۲. **Moral and Ethical Teachings:** The Sheikh's life serves as a model for interpersonal conduct and social responsibility:
- **Altruism and Compassion:** He exemplified *isar* (self-sacrifice), consistently putting the needs of neighbors and brothers before his own, even in matters of food and clothing.
 - **Humanitarian Character:** He maintained a deep commitment to visiting the sick, resolving interpersonal conflicts between others, and providing emotional support to the distressed.
 - **Social Justice and Etiquette:** He emphasized fairness (*insaf*), truthfulness, and the preservation of human rights, including strict adherence to the dignity of others.
 - **Personal Virtues:** His character was marked by profound humility (*tawazu*), generosity, kindness toward neighbors, and an unyielding commitment to honesty. Even in the face of mistreatment, he consistently responded with benevolence.

Conclusion

The *Sirat-e Ibn Khafif* functions as a vital didactic text that extends beyond historical biography. Sheikh Kabir emerges as an exemplar of the “complete human” in the Sufi tradition, balancing the rigors of religious devotion with a gentle, inclusive morality. He represents an ideal figure whose life, devoid of malice or exploitation, serves as a beacon for ethical conduct. The study concludes that the Sheikh's educational teachings—emphasizing self-discipline, social harmony, and unconditional kindness—remain highly relevant. By documenting these traits through



narrative anecdotes, the text provides a sophisticated model of moral education that bridges the gap between theoretical mysticism and practical, everyday ethics.