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**The Guide Book of Theoretical Tasawwuf: Content and Influences of
Sadr al-Din al-Qunawī's *Miftāh al-ghayb* *
Nazarî Tasavvuf Geleneğinin El Kitabı: Muhtevası ve Tesirleri Bağlamında
Sadreddin Konevî'nin Miftâhu'l-ğayb'ı**

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The Guide Book of Theoretical Tasawwuf: Content and Influences of Sadr al-Din al-Qunawī's *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*

Abstract: The history of sufism entered a new process called “period of muhaqqiqs /period of metaphysical sufism/ tasawwuf” with Ibn al-Arabī one of the most important intellectuals of sufi/tasawwuf thought. Ibn al-Arabī is the leading muhaqqiqs formulating the understanding of this period which is peculiar to itself with his books. However, the person who regulated the knowledge inherited from him and produced a new doctrine from it is Sadr al-Din al-Qunawī. His book, *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*, in which he exhibited this contribution, and which is assigned to principles and orders of theoretical tasawwuf thought is accepted as an essential book by muhaqqiqs after Qunawī. Because of its complicated and important content, many commentaries were written on *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*. Thus, theoretical tasawwuf thought by the commentators of Qunawī have taken Akbarian-Qunawīan form and gained a place in Turkish-Islamic thought. In this article, characteristics of metaphysical term in history of sufism will be mentioned shortly, the content and influences of *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* will be stated and the Akbarian-Qunawīan movement consisting from commentators of *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*, which have shaped the theoretical Tasawwuf thought will be introduced in general

Keywords: Sadr al-Din al-Qunawī, *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*, Theoretical tasawwuf, Metaphysic, Molla Fanārī.

Nazarî Tasavvuf Geleneğinin El Kitabı: Muhtevası ve Tesirleri Bağlamında

Sadreddin Konevî'nin Miftâhu'l-ğayb'ı

Öz: Tasavvuf düşüncesinin en önemli isimlerinden biri olan İbnü'l-Arabî ile birlikte tasavvuf tarihi “muhakkikler dönemi/metafizik tasavvuf dönemi” olarak adlandırılan yeni bir sürece girmiştir. İbnü'l-Arabî, bu dönemin kendisine mahsus anlayışını telifleriyle teşekkül ettiren muhakkiklerin başında gelmektedir. Ancak ondan tevarüs eden irfanî malumatı düzenleyerek sistemli bir nazariyat üreten ise hiç şüphesiz Sadreddin Konevî olmuştur. Onun bu katkısının en mühim meyvesi ise kendisinden sonraki muhakkik sûfîler tarafından adeta başucu kitabı olarak kabul edilen ve nazarî tasavvuf anlayışının usul ve esaslarına tahsis edilmiş olan *Miftâhu'l-ğayb*'dir. Muhtevasının yoğunluğu ve önemi sebebiyle bu eser üzerine pek çok şerh yazılmış ve böylece nazarî tasavvuf anlayışı, Konevî şârihleri vasıtasıyla

Ekberî-Konevî çizgide şekillenerek Türk-İslam düşüncesinde yerini almıştır. Bu makalede, tasavvuf tarihindeki metafizik dönemin özelliklerinden kısaca bahsedilerek *Miftâhu'l-ğayb*'ın muhtevası ve tesirleri hakkında bilgi verilecek, *Miftâhu'l-ğayb* şârihlerinden oluşan ve bahsi geçen nazarî tasavvuf anlayışını şekillendiren Ekberî-Konevî damar, ana hatlarıyla tanıtılmaya çalışılacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sadr al-Din al- Konevi, *Miftâhu'l-ğayb*, Nazarî sufizm, Metaphysics, Molla Fanârî.

SUMMARY

Sufism (tasawwuf), which is one of the fundamental branches of the Islamic thought like kalam and philosophy, has gone, from the beginning to the present day, through some different periods which have been classified by historians of sufism according to their characteristics. According to this classification, having begun as a movement of ascetism (zuhd), dominated by a practical and individual leaning, sufism acquired the status of an independent science about two centuries later and from the 13th century onwards, it evolved into a system with a metaphysical and theoretical characteristic where issues of philosophy and kalam began to be discussed and written about at length. This process, which is also called "period of muhaqqiqs (verifiers)", assumed, in addition to its aforesaid practical aspect, a theoretical dimension after Ghazālî especially with Ibn al-Arabî which aimed to arrive at the haqîqa (truth). However, it was Sadr al-Dîn al-Qunawî, who included the theoretical sufi thought, or "al-'ilm al-ilâhî (the divine science)" in the terminology of muhaqqiqs, which had reached its culmination with Ibn al-Arabî, in the hierarchy of formal sciences.

Qunawî's contribution to both theoretical sufi thought and the school of Ibn al-Arabî (Akbariyya) took place in several different ways. One of them was that he contributed to an understanding of Akbarian ideas by putting in order his thoughts, which were in a scattered manner in the works of Ibn al-Arabî. Another was that he shaped the metaphysical thought to a great extent through works he wrote. At the top of these works of Qunawî is his work entitled *Miftâh al-ghayb*, which could be regarded as the handbook of the new era in the history of sufism which emerged with Ibn al-Arabî.

With its content, its method and its suggestion of new ideas which had not been voiced until then, *Miftâh al-ghayb* had a shaping influence on the history of

sufism and history of Islamic thought. *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*, which was one of the essential texts of the new era called the period of muhaqqiqs, and an important aspect of it which would help it associate with a specific period in the history of thought was that not only did it provide information about this theoretical field but it also mentioned methods for evaluation of this kind of information as well as sources of this information and principles unique to this field. In other words, this book is in a way a method book for the field of doctrinarian sufism to which it belongs. In addition to this quality of it which arose from its content, there are two more features that render *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* important for the history of sufism. The first of them is this: Qunawī determined the subject matter, principles and issues of metaphysics, which he called al-‘ilm al-ilāhī, in this book. With this book by Qunawī, the discipline of sufism gained a place in the hierarchy of formal sciences. The second feature of *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* is this: The book has provided a significant contribution to rendering sufism a discipline which possesses the quality of self-criticism because Qunawī identified some criteria in this book by which a sufi or mystic could test his knowledge. These were some rules that helped true knowledge from void knowledge. In other words, these principles, which provided awareness about the value of the knowledge obtained as a result of the method of contemplation (mushahada), revealed the importance of exploratory knowledge and at the same time proved that sufism was a system that had its own method for obtaining information. This contribution, which Qunawī made through *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*, i.e. its ensuring an independent place for sufism in the classification of collected (mudawwan) sciences, its proving the validity of the observation method, which was the sufis' mushahada method for collecting information, and its revealing the merit of exploratory knowledge, is among the first in the history of sufism.

By virtue of its aforementioned characteristics, *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* attracted considerable attention among the Ottoman intellectuals and numerous annotations were written with regard to it. The only one among Qunawī's books about which various annotations were written is *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*. The reason for this is that the content of *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* was so intensive and concise as to need annotations and that it contains the essence of the views expressed in the other works of Qunawī. Therefore, an analysis of the content of *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* and an investigation of the literature written on this book is of great significance in terms of revealing the essential dynamics of the Ottoman tradition of science. *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*

has six annotations, the annotators of six of which are known whereas the annotators of two of them are not known. The writers of the six annotations are: Molla Fanārī, Qutb al-Dīn-zāda Izniqī, Ahmad İlāhī, Abd Allāh Qirimī, Uthmān Fadlī Atpazārī, and Abd al-Rahmān Rahmī Bursawī. Thanks to these annotations, Akbarian ideas entered into Ottoman intellectual life and formed its basis. The Turkish thought in general and the Ottoman thought in particular evolved on the basis of these ideas and acquired its unique identity.

The intellectual school which is composed of the aforementioned annotators of *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* and followers of Ibn Arabī is called the Akbarian school. In this school, a group which consists of annotators of *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* and which we can call “followers of Qunawī” differs from the other members of the school in terms of method and style because a striking aspect of annotations of *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* is that the manners by which the annotators approached the issues and the contents of the works were formed on the basis of Qunawī’s system. The annotators focused in their books on the topics which Qunawī had dealt with and they followed Qunawī’s method in their approach to the issues. Therefore, followers of Qunawī in the school differed partially from the followers of Ibn al-Arabī, and this school, composed of followers of Qunawī, became a school that had a method of its own. The greatest contribution in the shaping of this school undoubtedly came from Molla Fanārī because he was the first annotator of *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* and this enabled him to influence and shape the other annotations written after him. Moreover, Molla Fanārī’s use of principles of logic in the way he dealt with topics and in his explanations and his clarification of the issues by taking into consideration of the methods of philosophers played a significant part in the shaping of Qunawī’s streak (school). In short, it can be said that the Qunawī streak in the Akbarian school is a system that was shaped by the use of Qunawī’s methods and developed through Molla Fanārī’s approach. However, it should in no way be thought that this movement is outside of the Akbarian school by virtue of its approach and area of interest; on the contrary, it should be noted that Qunawī streak or movement appeared within the Akbarian school and that it had qualities that were unique to it.

INTRODUCTION

Sufism, which is one of the fundamental sciences in Islamic thought like kalam and philosophy, has undergone different periods, which were marked by historians of sufism with certain characteristics. According to this classification, sufism, which started with ascetism movement with strong practical and individual aspects, became an independent field of study almost two centuries later. As of 7th and 13th century, it has been regarded as a metaphysical/theoretical system in which philosophy and kalam topics are profoundly discussed. This period, which is also defined by inspiration¹ as “muhaqqiqs period” by some of the current sufism researchers after Qunawī (d. 673/1274), can also be regarded to start with Ghazālī’s (d. 505/1111) definition of sufism as a method that reaches people to truth². In addition to its practical aspect, after Ghazālī, especially with Ibn al-‘Arabī (d. 638/1240) sufism gained a theoretical dimension, which aims at attaining the truth. It was Sadr al-Dīn al-Qunawī introduced theoretical sufism,³ which reached to its peak with Ibn al-‘Arabī, or “al-‘ilm al-ilāhī (the divine science)” in the words of muhaqqiqs, in the hierarchy of formal sciences, and added to the prestige it gained with Ghazālī. Qunawī inherited the intellectual legacy of Ibn al-‘Arabī by reinterpreting and systematizing it and he was given the title of the “Great Sheik”, as his student, follower and commentator. Therefore, his name has always enjoyed a privileged and higher position among other commentators of Ibn al-‘Arabī like Fakhr al-Dīn ‘Iraqī (d. 688/1289), Mu‘ayyad al-Dīn Jandī (d. 691/1292) Sa‘d al-Dīn Sa‘īd al-Farghānī (d. 699/1300), ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī (d. 736/1335) and Dāvūd Qaysarī (d. 751/1350).⁴

¹ See Ekrem Demirli, *Sadreddin Konevî’de Bilgi ve Varlık* (Istanbul: İz Pub., 2005), 77.

² In *Munqidh*, after he has mentioned the ways and aims of the groups seeking haqīqa, Ghazālī points out that the aims of sufi way cannot be understood through learning but through enjoying and experiencing them in person. See. Abū Hāmid Muhammad b. Muhammad al-Ṭūsī al-Ghazālī, *Dalāletten Hidāyete*, translated by. Ahmet Subhi Furat (Istanbul: Şâmil Pub., nd), 70. His emphasis is considered to be one of the most important attribution to the value of exploratory information.

³ Ibn al-‘Arabī considers the period he lived as “the final one third of the night”, and pointed out that this period is a time when ma‘rifah reached its peak and matured. For detailed information see: Ekrem Demirli, *İslam Metafiziğinde Tanrı ve İnsan* (Istanbul: Kabalcı Pub., 2009), 45-52. Qunawī regards himself as the last representative of the marifah understanding which reached to perfection with Ibn al-‘Arabī. See. Sadr al-Dīn Muhammad b. Ishaq al-Qunawī, *Kitāb al-Fukūk fī-asrāri mus-tanidāti hikam al-Fuṣūṣ*, ed. Muhammad Hājawī (Tahran: Intishārāt Mawlā, 1371/1993), 152-153.

⁴ Demirli, *Sadreddin Konevî’de Bilgi ve Varlık*, 23.

Qunawî contributed to the thought of theoretical sufism and Akbarian school in various ways. One of them is his contribution to the understanding of Akbarian ideas by arranging Ibn al-‘Arabî’s disorderly ideas and the other is that he shaped metaphysical thought to a great extent. Among his writings, *Miftāh al-ghayb*, which can be regarded as the handbook of the new era emerged with Ibn al-‘Arabî, is on the first rank. Qunawî has gained the attribution of “founder thinker”⁵ with the ideas he presented in this work of him. As a matter of fact, he starts his book with an introduction which can be found in books of science classifications from Fārābî (d. 339/950) to Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna) (d. 428/1037). After mentioning the fundamental elements of a system that makes it “science”, Qunawî examined al-‘ilm al-ilāhî (the divine science) which is also called metaphysics, with reference to these elements, and tried and succeeded to lay foundation for it as a systematic science. Therefore, as a book of metaphysics/the divine science, *Miftāh al-ghayb* ranks on the top among prominent books of new sufism era which started with Ibn al-‘Arabî and Qunawî. The new age sufism is also referred as “muhaqqis period”, “metaphysical/theoretical sufism period”, “era of commentaries” by today’s sufism researchers after the names of influential thinkers of the period use and the focus in this period. In the current article, these names will be used to refer to new age sufism.

With its content, method and some of its ideas that had never been mentioned before, *Miftāh al-ghayb* has had a profound influence both in the history of sufism and in the history of Islamic thought. It did not remain as a fundamental text of its time but has been the subject of many commentaries for centuries after it was written. The commentaries written by Ottoman thinkers enabled the survival of the metaphysical thinking, which reached its peak with Ibn al-‘Arabî and Qunawî and entered into maturity period. It is important to note here that: Although several studies have been carried out on the effects of Ibn al-‘Arabî and Qunawî on the development of theoretical sufism tradition, they were limited to the influence of Ibn al-‘Arabî and his followers. However, this process was led mainly by Qunawî and his commentators. The guidance and influence mentioned will be explained with the framework of *Miftāh al-ghayb* and its commentaries. In

⁵ See. Ekrem Demirli, “Türk Düşüncesinin Kurucu Düşünürü Olarak Konevî”, *I. Uluslararası Sadreddin Konevî Sempozyumu Proceedings* (Konya: Mebkam Pub., 2010), 77-80.

this sense, the content of the work will be shortly analyzed to determine main issues and basic intellectual tendencies of that age, later on the commentary tradition developed upon it will be presented. In this way, the characteristics of Akbarian-Qunawī school which has developed around *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* and which guided sufism thinking will be discussed.

1. NEW AGE IN THE HISTORY OF SUFISM: FROM PRACTICE TO METAPHYSICS

Metaphysics is a branch of philosophy, which treats being in terms of its existence, and study principles of metaphysical reasons and information. This discipline is called *metaphysics* after Aristotle's work entitled *Metaphysica* and it has been very influential in determination of its topic, problems and terminology as a whole. The meaning ascribed to the term metaphysics since classical age of Islam was also related with Aristotle and his book titled *Metaphysics*. This work was translated into Arabic and was given the name of *Mā ba'da al-tabīa*, a term which was also used in Islamic word to name the discipline metaphysics."⁶

While some philosophers see metaphysics as a discipline that use rational methods, some other philosophers like Ibn Tufail (d. 581/1185), Ibn Sab'īn (d. 669/1270) and Shahāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī (d. 563/1167) relate metaphysic information with mystic-sufistic experience and ensuing exploratory information. According to them, although theoretical information has some scientific value, metaphysics information can be attained through mystic information and experience.⁷ In this sense, it was Ibn al-'Arabī, who integrated metaphysics with sufism, which is the corresponds to an area of mystic experience in Islam, because his doctrine of "unity of existence", which he builds in his works, is in essence metaphysical. According to him, it is not possible to reach true metaphysical knowledge by excluding exploratory information acquired through sufistic pleasure and spiritual exploration.⁸

Metaphysical sufism, in other words theoretical wisdom, is defined by S. Hussein Nasr as a rational and intellectual scientific collection which differs from

⁶ İlhan Kutluer, "Metafizik", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 29 (Ankara: Diyanet Vakfı Pub., 2004), 399.

⁷ Kutluer, "Metafizik", 399.

⁸ Kutluer, "Metafizik", 401.

kalam and philosophy, but which approaches their issues from different perspectives.⁹ This theoretical intellectual understanding can be regarded as more developed version of marifah and nafs (self) theories, which were expressed by sufis like Dzun-Nūn al-Misrī (d. 245/859 [?]), Mansur al-Hallaj (d. 309/922) or Junayd al-Baghdādī (d. 297/909) in the early period of history of sufism. The start of synthesis among disciplines in Islamic world, sufi thinkers' encountering with philosophical issues and the introduction of new approaches to these issues are cited among the reasons why the muhaqqiqs period, in other words theoretical sufism period, emerged in the history of sufism. This period was called as "metaphysics age" both in Islamic thought history and history of sufism.¹⁰ In this period, with Sheik al-Akbar (the Great Sheik) topics like existence, God, the relation between God and universe, have become the basic issues of sufism. The most important book that handles these issues via exploratory information and methods of sufism is undoubtedly *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* (the Essence of Wisdom) by Ibn al-'Arabī.¹¹ It can be argued that *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, which has influenced sufism, kalam and philosophy profoundly and which provides a whole summary of Ibn al-'Arabī's thinking system, is his most important work. With the commentaries written by Qunawī and later by his students, the new age in sufism and thinking history started to create its own classics.

We have already noted that when it first emerged, sufism was heavily related to practical and moral sides of Islam, and its theoretical/doctrinal wisdom developed after the 6th/7th century and works with this understanding were written in this period. However, when describing this historical developmental process, one question comes to mind: Had not sufis reached marifah and wisdom until metaphysics period? If we were to accept that theoretical sufism understanding which was shaped around the idea of unity of existence started only after 6th or 12th century, we would pass over the fact that this knowledge was first enjoyed as

⁹ Sayyed Hussein Nasr, "Theoretical Gnosis and Doctrinal Sufism and Their Significance Today", *Transcendent Philosophy*, vol. 1, (London Academy of Iranian Studies), 2.

¹⁰ For a brief description of the passage to the era of metaphysics see. Abdullah Kartal, "Metafizik Dönemden Geriye Bakmak, İbnü'l-Arabî'nin İlk Sûfilerin Bazı Görüşleri Hakkındaki Eleştirileri", *Tasavvuf Dergisi* vol. 23, (2009): 358-360. For the development of sufism from practice to theory see. Demirli, *Sadreddin Konevî'de Bilgi ve Varlık*, 29-35.

¹¹ For the influence of *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*'s commentaries see. Dilaver Gürer, "Fusûsu'l-Hikem", *Tasavvuf Dergisi* vol. 13 (2004): 395-442.

oneness (tawhid) by the Prophet (pbuh) and his companions and later by the first generation of ascetics and sufis. It is clear that ignoring its existence is not correct because the most basic sources of theoretical knowledge are Quran and sunnah and then the books written by early sufis. Besides, their ascetic lives and moral practices that correspond to sufism's practical dimension are intertwined. More clearly, they experienced theory and practice together. Due to this integration, they did not need to express the theoretical dimension, the intertwined nature of practical and theoretical aspects laid the foundation for the expression of marifah. We are of opinion that as we get closer to the Prophet in time, the practical dimensions of the two fundamental components of sufism: worship and marifah, get more intense and this intensity renders the basic principles of theory unnecessary. When the practical dimension started to lose its intensity, the need to present theoretical aspects and its fundamental principles emerged. Therefore, the works of sufis in the early period do not feature the theoretical and philosophical interpretations of marifah and wisdom that are seen in Akbarian writers.¹² As a matter of fact, in a study by S. Hussein Nasr, in which he gave information about theoretical wisdom points out that the initial sources of metaphysics sufism are Quran, hadiths and the books of the early sufis. He also remarked that the topics and issues of this discipline became more oblivious as of 4th century with Al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī (d. 320/932), Ghazālī, his brother Ahmad al-Ghazālī (d. 520/1126) and 'Ayn-al-Qudāt al-Hamadānī (d. 525/1131), and further revealed in almost all details with the works of Ibn al-'Arabī.¹³ Therefore, many things included in the content of theoretical sufism have been known since the early periods of Islam, but it was not until the 5th and 6th centuries that specific terms were coined and put down on paper.

¹² Ibn al-'Arabī points out that there are some differences between the earliest period of Islam and his period as time and divine manifestation changed. According to him, the Prophet's (pbuh) era essentially aimed at development of an understanding of nass (Quran and Hadith) by people and removal of elements against Islam. As a matter of fact, this was the most important duty of the Prophet. Just like him, the first followers of the Prophet, fought against idols and tried to make the belief of Unity of Allah dominant. Therefore, they did not mention ilms of haqīqa. The period Ibn al-'Arabī lived was a period of "exploration and observation" see. Abū Abd Allah Muhyiddīn Muhammad b. Ali Ibn al-'Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, ed. Uthman Yahya (Beirut: Dār Ehyā al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1994), 5: 102. For a general description of sufi thought in this two period see. Demirli, *Sadreddin Konevi'de Bilgi ve Varlık*, 54-55.

¹³ Nasr, "Theoretical Gnosis and Doctrinal Sufism and Their Significance Today", 3.

It was Sadr al-Dīn al-Qunawī, who marked the boundaries and systematized metaphysics sufism whose details were revealed by Ibn al-‘Arabī in all his works, particularly in *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* and *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*. Sadr al-Dīn al-Qunawī determined the subjects, principles and issues in the divine science and enabled it to have its place among other sciences as an independent discipline, which means a very immense change in the history of thinking.¹⁴ The three components mentioned (theme, principles, issues) are the cornerstones for a system to be called science.¹⁵ It is essential to note that what is new here is that Qunawī handles metaphysics as a science with the framework of themes, issues and principles.¹⁶ The book in which Sadr al-Dīn al-Qunawī told the ideas that led to the mentioned transformation is *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*. Besides its importance in this aspect, the work has made great contributions to the sufistic thinking in particular and to Islamic thinking in general as it was expounded by many Ottoman scientists and thinkers. In this context, it can also be argued that the second most important representatives of this field of study after Ibn al-‘Arabī and Sadr al-Dīn al-Qunawī, who are founders and most important figures in theoretical sufism, are the muhaqqiqs, who expounded *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, *al-Qaṣīda al-tāiyya* and *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*, which are considered as the most fundamental works in the field. Among these muhaqqiqs, the commentators of *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*, who will be mentioned in the following section of the article, make up the Akbarian-Qunawian line.

1.1. Examination of *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* in terms of the Principles of Sufi Metaphysics

The full name of *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*, which is one of the basic texts of the period called Muhaqqiqs period, is *Miftāḥ ghayb al-jam‘ wa’l-wujūd*.¹⁷ The name of the work immediately suggests that it is about the invisible and metaphysics. However, what makes *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* so successful that it is identified with a special period in the thinking history is that it does not only give theoretical information about this

¹⁴ Kutluer, “Metafizik”, 399.

¹⁵ Muhammad Ali b. Ali al-Tahānawī, *Kitāb Kashshāf ‘isṭilāḥāt al-funūn* (Istanbul: Kahraman Pub., 1984), 1: 7. Haji Halifa Mustafa b. Abd Allah Kātip Chalabi, *Kashf al-zunūn ‘an ‘esmā’ al-kutub wa al-funūn* (Istanbul: 1941-1943) 1: 5-6.

¹⁶ Ekrem Demirli, *Sadreddin Konevî* (Istanbul: ISAM Pub., 2008), 27.

¹⁷ For the copies of the works published on different dates and translations see. Reşat Öngören, “Miftāḥu’l-gayb”, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 30 (Istanbul: TDV Pub., 2005), 17.

theoretical field but also mentions the methods to evaluate this information, the sources of such information and unique principles of this field of study. In other words, it is a book of methodology for doctrinal sufism.

Although Qunawī does not clearly state the reason why he wrote *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*, he shortly mentions some principles, exordia, methods and principles about existence, original ranks and ultimate aims, and that the details of them are each keys and principles in learning topics like knowledge, names and ranks.¹⁸ These statements by the author indicate that *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* is a book of methodology dedicated to principles and methods of the divine science. Besides, according to Qunawī these principles and methods make up a whole and they explain in each other for learning the topics to be learnt.¹⁹ In this case, it is also meaningful that the work is called “*Miftāḥ al-ghayb/the key to the invisible*”. Qunawī remarks that the design and content of the work is not a product of his thought and they were written with divine will and were not obtained as a result of deliberation or contemplation.²⁰ At this point, we can say that Qunawī's *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* was inscribed with divine dictation just like *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*.²¹

In addition to this feature related to its content, there are two other specialities of *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*, which earn it a significant place in history of sufism. First, the author determined the topic, principles and issues of metaphysics, which he calls the divine science. According to Qunawī, just as every discipline, the divine science has its own topics (mawdū), principles (mabādī) and issues (masāil). This is an issue that was emphasized before Qunawī. Muslim philosophers Fārābī²² and Ibn Sīnā²³ state that every evidenced discipline should have these three essential components. Determination of topics, principles and issues of the divine science

¹⁸ Sadr al-Dīn Muhammad b. Ishaq al-Qunawī, *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*, ed. Muhammad Hājawī (Tahran: Intishārāt-i Mawlā, 1384/2006), 8.

¹⁹ See. Qunawī, *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*, 8.

²⁰ Qunawī, *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*, 9.

²¹ In the introduction of the his work *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* states that Prophet Muhammed (pbuh) has given him a book in his dream and asked him to deliver it to people and wrote this book and reported the book as a translator without making comments. See. Abū Abd Allah Muhyiddīn Muhammad b. Ali Ibn al-'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, ed. Abū al-Alā al-Afifī (s.l.: Dāru Ehyā' al-Kutub al-Arabiyya, 1946) 46.

²² Abū Nasr Muhammad b. Muhammad al-Fārābī, *'Iḥsā' al-'ulūm* (Beirut: Maktabat al-Hilal, 1996), 74-79.

²³ Abū Ali Hussain b. Abd Allah Ibn Sīnā, *'Uyūn al-ḥikma*, ed. Mujtabā Minowī (Tahran: Intishārāt-i Dānishgāh-i Tahran, 1333/1955), 11.

by Qunawî, means that he has determined the place of sufism as a discipline among formal sciences.²⁴

According to Qunawî, the subject of the divine science is the existence of Haqq (wujūd al-Haqq). However, the existence of Haqq is not a subject in terms of its identity but in terms of His connection with the universe, that is, its relation with living creatures and that universe comes into being from Him. As a matter of fact, Haqq is related to nothing in terms of His identity, He is abstemious from the universe of created beings and there is no mental, speculative indicator and expression that can explain this character of Him.²⁵ The principles of the divine science are the essences of the haqīqas which are requirements of Haqq's existence. They are also called as "Proper names" "asma' al-dhāt".²⁶ The issues of metaphysics include proper names, attributes and performance related names of Allah, that is, the truths of concerning principles explained with the help of principles, and their levels, "places", their correlations, details of His works in term of their realization and connection and things emerging thanks to them. The issues of metaphysics are the things related with haqīqas of principles explained by means of 'asmā al-dhat, 'asmā al-sifāt, and 'asmā al-fi'l in a word principles of metaphysics.²⁷ All these are related to two things. The first one is knowing that Haqq is related to the universe and the universe is related to Haqq; the other includes the knowable and unknowable issues of this mutual connection.²⁸ What is understood from this definition is that praises, attributes and names become visible according to the things related with haqīqas of principles, their productions, levels and places and obtained in this way.²⁹ In other words, principles are decisive in issues because problems and issues are analyzed and solved according to principles. Besides, issues consist of the topics concerning the relation between Haqq and the universe.

The second important characteristic of *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* is that it has made significant contributions to the transformation of sufism as a discipline with auto-

²⁴ For a comprehensive discussion of the importance of themes, issues and principles for the divine science to be a discipline on its own see. Demirli, *Sadreddin Konevî*, 75.

²⁵ Qunawî, *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*, 19.

²⁶ Qunawî, *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*, 6.

²⁷ Ahmad İlâhî, *Mawājīd al-dhawq bi-lā-rayb*, Yusuf Ağa Lib., no. 414, (manuscript of writer), 29^a-34^b.

²⁸ Qunawî, *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*, 6.

²⁹ Qutb al-Dīn zāda Mehmed Muhyiddīn al-Izniqî, *Fath Miftāḥ al-ghayb*, Konya Mawlānā Museum Lib., no. 1632, 14^a.

critical property. Hence, in this work Qunawī determined some criteria with which a sufi can test his/her knowledge. These are some principles that help distinguishing authentic marifah from void one. Although Ibn al-‘Arabī had already expressed them in different contexts and disorderly in his works, these rules, which Qunawī calls “investigation principles”, were first introduced by Qunawī systematically and collectively. Qunawī states “the divine science cannot be limited with any measure”³⁰, which means that it cannot be confined with a system but it does not mean that it has no criteria. With these principles, the author has developed a framework through which the divine science can interpret sufistic ideas that emerged in different eras and regions on a common ground. According to him, by virtue of these principles, the differences between apparent and al-‘ilm al-ladunnī (divinely-inspired knowledge), inspirations and some manifestations by high ranking sufis are known and it is ascertained whether they are divine or demonic.³¹ Therefore, binding the divine science to certain criteria means that this discipline will become objective and ideas proposed in this discipline gain an objective foundation. Sadr al-Dīn al-Qunawī’s principles that help reveal the value of metaphysic knowledge also determines the principles of the sufism method proposed by Ghazālī to reach the truth. Thus, it can be argued that Qunawī contributed to the prestige of the discipline of sufism and its legitimacy against al-ulūm al-zāhir (exterior science) and “further developed the process started by Ghazālī and completed it”.

Throughout the history of thought, methods of accessing knowledge and the value of knowledge have been the most debated issues. In this sense, wisdom and nass (Quran and hadiths based evidence) were accepted as reliable source of knowledge. However, some metaphysical issues which cannot be explained with religious texts and in which wisdom falls short have brought sufis method of mushahada (manifestation) as a way of obtaining authentic marifah. Thus, with the addition of knowledge of nass and exploratory knowledge, which is theoretically obtained, marifah of Allah (knowledge of Allah) has reached its scientific identity with the name of “the divine science”. However, it is apparent that there is a need for a set of criteria to check the validity and reliability of knowledge

³⁰ Qunawī, *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*, 7.

³¹ Qunawī, *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*, 8.

which sufis obtained as a result of some practices of purification of self. The principles of analysis mentioned above satisfy this need. In other words, Qunawî's principles which provide consciousness about the value of knowledge obtained through mushahada method do not only reveal the value of exploratory knowledge but also prove that sufism is a system with its own means of obtaining knowledge.

Qunawî assessed sufism in terms of the characteristics a field of study should have and determined its themes, principles and issues; thus, earned it a place among established sciences. He demonstrated the reliability of mushahada method, which sufis use to access knowledge, and the value of exploratory knowledge for the first time in the history of sufism. This achievement by Qunawî also laid an epistemological foundation for sufism, which can also be accepted by theologians and philosophers. By determining principles of analysis, he demonstrated the epistemic value of mushahada method thereby grounding the sufistic knowledge system on a systematic foundation that can be accepted by everyone. At this point, it can be easily argued that the reason why *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* is regarded as turning point in history of sufism is that it has led to change and transformation mentioned above.

1.2. The Content of *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* in the Context of Metaphysics Era

Miftāḥ al-ghayb is compiled to include a brief introduction, an overall introduction, chapters that make up the main body of the book and a final chapter, which corresponds to one third of the book and which is dedicated to the characteristics of perfect human being. In his work, Qunawî starts with defining topics, principles and issues, which are necessary for an established field of study, and evaluating the divine science in terms of these components. After he grounded the divine science as a discipline, he mentions principles of analysis which enables the analysis of sufi's subjective and relative knowledge and thereby transforming it into knowledge that can be accepted by everyone.

The aim of almost all these basic principles of the divine science is to prove the proposition that "existence is Haqq" from various aspects. In other words, they are the principles that help explain the idea that apparent plurality in existence is

actually appearance of the Absolute One at various levels.³² These principles also revealed the connection between “mutlaq (absolute)” and “muqayyad (existing upon condition)” and the conditions of the knowledge of absolute by the muqayyad.³³

The most basic issue in *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* is the existence of Haqq, which is also an issue in the divine science. Qunawī defines wujūd al-Haqq as “al-wujūd al-bakht”, which has no condition for existence or as “mahzā wujūd (absolute existence)”. This existence features real oneness, which cannot be reversely thought to be plural. We can say that almost the whole book was allocated to the explanation of the connection between the absolute existence who is obligatory and one and the plurality observed at present. This connection includes appearance of the existing thing and the demands of cognizance of wujūd al-Haqq. Therefore, the connection between Haqq-universe is one of the main themes covered in ontological and epistemological perspective in *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*. The connection between absolute existence and the universe brings up the issue of divine names as elements that achieve this connection. As is known, while Haqq has no connection with anything in its level of absoluteness, He is connected with the created ones in the emergence levels, which are the next levels. Therefore, the relation between Haqq and universe directly brings the issue of divine names in the divine science. Qunawī regards divine names as the principles the divine science. Created beings, each of which is manifestation reflecting the names and attributes of Haqq, comes into being by virtue of divine names, and Haqq can be comprehended with these names, as well. As a matter of fact, according to Qunawī, all similitude things that are seen in the universe are copies of truths of names. In other words, divine names and attributes determine how created beings come into existence. In this context, it is quite meaningful that Qunawī determined divine names, which have a great role in our understanding of how created things come into being, as the principles of metaphysics.

³² For example, the principle that “One minus one” explains the nature of Absolute Existence and plurality. See. Qunawī, *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*, 11, 20. For the explanation of the principle see: Shams al-Dīn Muhammad b. Hamza al-Fanārī, *Miṣbāḥ al-‘uns bayna al-ma‘qūl wa al-mashūd*, ed. Muhammad Hājawī (Tahran: Intishārāt-i Mawlā, 1384/2006), 86-98.

³³ Qunawī, *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*, 11-18.

The levels of existence, which is another important issue in theoretical sufism, were discussed in *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* under various classifications. Qunawī assesses existence within the framework of "nikāḥ (visibility) levels",³⁴ "the five levels"³⁵ and "the level that is based on closeness to unity"³⁶. However, the main emphasis about levels is on explanation of the difference between absoluteness level which is called "ahadiyah (oneness)", "ḥaqīqah al-ḥaqāiq (the truth of truths)" and "jam' (totality) level", and the next level "ulūhiyah (divinity) level", where manifestation and distinguishing start. Therefore, all issues in *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* are focused on explanation of the existence of Haqq from various aspects. On the other hand, absolute entity leaves absoluteness level and emerges and distinguishes itself, which makes it possible to be the subject of knowledge. While Haqq transforms its absoluteness into limitations, He also wants to be known with "al-mayl al-hubbī (inclination with love)". This is revealed by Haqq by saying "I was a hidden treasure; I loved to be known and created beings"³⁷. However, it leads to a problem in the comprehension of existence and the truth. The problem is that nothing can be understood with its absolute existence or in terms of its ḥaqīqa (mystical truth). By focusing on this problem, Qunawī, like other muhaqqis, also focuses on "nafs al-emr (thing in itself)", which is one of the fundamental issues in metaphysics thinking. According to Qunawī, nafs al-emr is the collection of all dif-

³⁴ Muhaqqiq sufis resembled the creation of the universe and birth of each level from another level as metaphysical espousal. Therefore, they talked about a kind of level classification called as "espousal levels." Qunawī classifies them as follows: 1- Divine complaisance with essential names, 2- Spiritual espousal, 3- natural-angelic espousal 4- Base-elemental espousal. For entities in each level of espousal see. Qunawī, *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*, 42-46.

³⁵ This classification is very common in sufism culture, and classified as 1- Invisible, 2- Ta'ayyun-i awal (Visible Primarily) and Ta'ayyun-i thāni (Visible collaterally), 3- The world of spirits, 4- The world of examples, 5- The world of testimony. See. Mahmut Erol Kılıç, *Şeyh-i Ekber*, (Istanbul: Sufi Pub., 2010), 237.

³⁶ The classification of levels which is based on closeness to Unity, starts from al-Qalam al-A'lā to al-Lavh al-Mahfūz, Arsh (The divine throne), Kursū, Samāvāt-i Sab'a, Anāsār-i 'Arba'a and ends with Muwalladāt-i Thalātha. For detailed information about the manifestations occurring in every level we have listed here see. Qunawī, *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*, 47-62.

³⁷ See. Ismail b. Muhammad al-Ajlūnī, *Kashf al-Khafā wa mudzīl al-'ilbās* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'ilmiyya, 1997), 2: 121.

ferent decrees and cases that are realized or not realized in spiritual-logical-sensual cognizance.³⁸ Therefore, authentic marifah can be or cannot be known through wisdom and exploration. In this context, Qunawī also mentions the characteristics of authentic marifah. According to him, thinking about something cannot penetrate beyond it, it is not perfect and complete.³⁹ Therefore, authentic marifah, true and sound knowledge should be obtained via means of knowledge and suitable conditions, which are in line with the quality mentioned.

Like many muhaqqiq, Qunawī thinks that the condition for the realization of knowledge is to find a connection/suitability between what is known and unknown. Qunawī bases this connection rule on the analysis principle which he expresses “Nothing can be known with something other than it and its being different or opposite” and relates the knowability of God with each entity’s relation to level of divinity.⁴⁰ As a matter of fact, created beings have existence as facsimiles in Haqq’s knowledge before they come into existence. This existence (thing’s existence in Haqq’s knowledge) procures the connection we have expressed above. Therefore, the connection that is expressed as the condition for knowledge is also an important issue in Qunawī’s *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*. Naturally, we see that Qunawī largely discusses this issue in his work. It must be noted here that the existence and knowledge areas related to the divine science, in other words, the ontological and epistemological aspects, are methodologically intertwined in *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*. Nevertheless, the existence of entity in Haqq’s knowledge is its most basic ontological unit and this existence enables the connection it needs to reach knowledge. In other words, the basic areas of “thing”, ontology and epistemology, were synthesized as in the example given. More clearly, the essences in the intertwining of these two fields of study were put forward by Qunawī in a principled way which explains the methodology of the divine science. That is why this work has an important place in history of sufism.

The final chapter of *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*, which corresponds to almost one third of the book, was devoted to the issue of Insan-i Kamil (perfect human being). However, Qunawī does not discuss perfect human being in its classical meaning, but discusses human being in general. He regards human being as an ontological being

³⁸ Qunawī, *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*, 68.

³⁹ Qunawī, *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*, 83.

⁴⁰ See. Qunawī, *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*, 14.

and explains all stages in its coming into being. In other words, in this section, human being is examined from “existence” point of view. As it can be understood from the information provided in this article so far, *Miftāh al-ghayb* is not a book written for layman. On the contrary, it was compiled for people who have acquired a certain amount of knowledge and experience in *sayr wa sulūk* (spiritual journey) and wisdom. This is expressed by Qunawī as follows:

“This book is not written for layman and not even for distinguished people. This is written for the highly knowledgeable people (*khavās al-khavās*). These people benefit from this book before reaching their aims during their spiritual journey; they remember their states in the beginning of their journey. Thus, they reach spiritual maturity and help others reach maturity, thank Allah and wish their discernment to be increased. Haqq increase their discernment.”⁴¹

In *Miftāh al-ghayb* Qunawī methodologically chooses to determine the principles first and then explain theoretical aspects based on these principles. For example, he clarifies the ideas he has proposed in the previous chapters with examples in the final chapter, which he allocated for *al-insān al-kāmil* (perfect human being). Therefore, this section is just like a summary of the book. The arrangement in *Miftāh al-ghayb* clearly reflects Qunawī’s systematicity; there is not any disarray of ideas in the book. However, the most fundamental characteristics of *Miftāh al-ghayb* is that it is extremely succinct and covert. The author did not prefer to explain his ideas with a lot of rich explanations. As he wrote in the introduction of the essay he wrote the book with style that can only be understood by people who have special interest in the topic. Besides, the number of commentaries written on the book also indicates the succinct characteristics of the work.

Because of these characteristics, *Miftāh al-ghayb* attracted a great deal of attention of the Ottoman intellectuals and a number of commentaries have been written on it. It can even be argued that no other work has been as much influential as *Miftāh al-ghayb*. Ottoman sultans, especially Mehmed the Conqueror, admired Qunawī. The fact that Mehmed the Conqueror asked prominent scholars of his time to write commentaries is a clear example indicating the influence of this work on Ottoman thought and intellectual life. Therefore, the analysis of *Miftāh al-ghayb*'s content and examination of the literature on this literature has become

⁴¹ Qunawī, *Miftāh al-ghayb*, 34.

more of an issue for revealing the basic dynamics of the Ottoman tradition of knowledge. However, before moving on the analysis of the commentators and their works, which make up the Qunawī line, I would like to mention some basic characteristic of this line as it can contribute to a more profound understanding of the topic. Then, commentaries on *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* will be mentioned briefly.

2. QUNAWĪ LINE AS THE MAIN VEIN OF AKBARIAN SCHOOL

Miftāḥ al-ghayb written by Qunawī, whose content and historical influences discussed above, is one of the most important work of theoretical sufism literature. sufism metaphysics has developed and gotten richer with *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* and *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*. Qunawī also asked his disciples to expound *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* and *al-Qaṣīda al-tāiyya* written by Ibn al-Fārid, which is one of the most fundamental texts of wahdat al-wujūd (unity of existence) understanding. Therefore, it was Sadr al-Dīn al-Qunawī, who after Ibn al-‘Arabī shaped and directed Akbarian school. Qunawī created a systematic theory by blending the partially disordered accumulation of knowledge and material coming from Ibn al-‘Arabī. Therefore, the way Qunawī handles the issues in wahdat al-wujūd and his style in his works passed on to the writers in this tradition. The influence of Qunawī can be clearly seen in the works of his followers, i.e. in the works of Qunawī’s commentators.

In Akbarian school, the group of writers, who we can call the “Followers of Qunawī”, consist of commentators of Qunawī’s *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*. It is the only book among Sadr al-Dīn al-Qunawī 's works on which so many commentaries were written⁴² because the content of *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* is so intense and succinct that it needs to be elucidated. This work is the essence of Qunawī's views in his works. Therefore, in metaphysic era, *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* received as much attention as *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* and was the subject of many commentaries. What is striking in the commentaries of *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* is the way that commentators approach issues and the content of their works was shaped by the systematicity of Qunawī. As a matter of fact, the commentators focussed on the topics Qunawī discusses and followed Qunawī’s method in their approach to issues. Generally, in his works and especially in

⁴² Although there are commentaries on Qunawī’s *al-Nuṣūṣ fi taḥqīq al-tawr al-makḥṣūṣ* and *E’jāz al-bayān*, their numbers too low to be comparable with *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*. For more information see: Betül Güçlü, "Writings of Sadr al-Dīn al-Qunawī", *The Meram Book*, ed. Dilaver Gürer-Bekir Şahin (Istanbul: Mebkam Pub., 2007), 207-216.

Miftāḥ al-ghayb, Qunawī discusses issues more neatly and in a more systematic and more limitedly compared to Ibn al-‘Arabī. This is reflected in the commentators’ works as well. Therefore, the Qunawī followers within the Akbarian school different from the followers of Ibn al-‘Arabī to some extent and become a new school with their unique method.

Of course Shams al-Dīn al-Fanārī (d. 834/1431) has made the biggest contribution to the development of this line. As a matter of fact, he was the first commentator of *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* and affected and shaped other commentaries that followed. Besides, the way Fanārī handled issues, used the principles of logic and methods of philosophy in his explanations have played great role in the development of the Qunawī line. Almost all of the commentaries that we will mention below were influenced from Fanārī’s *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* commentary. In short, it can be said that the Qunawī line in the Akbarian tradition was shaped with the methods of Qunawī and developed Fanārī’s approach. However, the approach and field of interest of this line cannot be thought to be out of the Akbarian school. It must be noted that with its unique characteristics Qunawī line is an approach and a vein emerged within the Akbarian tradition.

There many different figures reported with regard to the number of commentaries of *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*.⁴³ However, we have determined that there are a total of eight commentaries of *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*, six of whose authors are known and two of whose authors are not known. The authors of these commentaries are: Mulla Shams al-Dīn al-Fanārī (834/1431), Qutb al-Dīn-zāda Izniqī (d. 885/1480), Ahmad İlāhī (d. XV. yy), Abd Allāh Qirimī (d. XV. yy), Uthmān Fadlī Atpazārī (d. 1102/1691), Abd al-Rahmān Rahmī Bursawī (d. 1173/1759) and two other commentators whose names are not known. When Fanārī’s date of death and Qunawī’s date of death are taken consideration, it is seen that the first commentary of *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* was written almost two centuries after Qunawī’s death. The first works cited in these

⁴³ Osman Ergin, who has made a bibliographical study on Sadr al-Dīn al-Qunawī’s works states that there are nine commentaries of *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* [see. Osman Ergin, “Sadreddin Al-Kunavi ve Eserleri”, *Şarkiyat Mecmuası* 2, (1958): 69-72]. We have determined the number of commentaries to be eight not nine because the commentary Osman Ergin noted to be in Suleymaniye Library Esad Efendi with registration number 1729 and which he attributed to Malkochzada Mustafa Efendi is actually not another commentary but a copy of commentary by Abd al-Rahmān Rahmī Bursawī. For more information see. Betül Gürer, *Molla Fenârî’nin Varlık ve Bilgi Anlayışı* (Istanbul: İnsan Pub., 2016), 123-124.

commentaries written by the Ottoman scholars and thinkers are the works of Qunawī other than *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*. Apart from them, the commentators also used the works of Dāvūd Qaysarī, Abd al-Rezzāq Kāshānī, Mu‘ayyad al-Dīn al-Jandī, who are the leading writers of Akbarian tradition.

The most concrete examples of Qunawī line, which we tried to mention with its main characteristics, are the commentaries of *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*, which will discuss below. In the following section, the commentaries and their characteristics are discussed.

2.1. The Commentary by Shams al-Dīn Fanārī: *Misbāḥ al-ʿuns*

Misbāḥ al-ʿuns, which has been one of the essential sources of theoretical wisdom instruction in Iran and Anatolia,⁴⁴ is the first commentary of *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* of Sadr al-Dīn al-Qunawī and is the most voluminous commentary. Fanārī is the leading figure in the new era, which started with Ibn al-‘Arabī and which gained a theoretical perspective.⁴⁵

The full name of the work is “*Misbāḥ al-ʿuns bayna al-ma‘qūl wa al-mashhūd fī sharḥ Miftāḥ ghayb al-jam‘ wa al-wujūd*”, which can be literally translated as “The candle of relation between what is devised and what is observed in the commentary on the key to the invisible side of existence and jam‘ (all)”. In this work, it is seen that the author seeks to combine information based on reasoning and information based on spiritual exploration. Fanārī maintained Qunawī’s attempt to base information obtained through spiritual exploration on an objective ground using principles of investigation. Fanārī’s discussion of the issues in *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* with reasoning and evidences together with spiritual exploration caused *Misbāḥ al-ʿuns* to be very voluminous. Both the insensitivity and richness of the content Qunawī discussed in his work and Fanārī’s style of approaching the issues from a variety of perspectives caused *Misbāḥ al-ʿuns* to be an encyclopaedia like reference book which includes almost all issues in metaphysics. Nevertheless, the work mainly aims to explain the relation between Haqq-Universe. As the work has such a relation as its topics, it includes many topics like existence, marifah, names of Allah, manifestation and cosmology.

⁴⁴ The original copy of the work is available in Suleymaniye Library, Esat Efendi with registration number 1554.

⁴⁵ For his life see. Hakkı Aydın, "Molla Fenârî", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 30 (İstanbul: TDV Pub., 2005), 245; Gürer, *Molla Fenârî'nin Varlık ve Bilgi Anlayışı*, 31-75.

When writing *Misbāh al-ʿuns* Fanārī benefitted from the ideas of previous muhaqqis like Abd al-Razzāq Kāshānī, Saʿīd al-Dīn al-Farghānī, and remoulded the Akbarian ideas which pass from Ibn al-ʿArabī to Qunawī and to his disciples, and enabled the development of aforementioned tradition in the Ottoman by transferring them to his successors.

2.2. Commentary by Qutb al-Dīn-zāda Izniqī: *Faṭḥu Miftāḥ al-ghayb*

Qutb al-Dīn-zāda,⁴⁶ compiled the commentary upon the request of Mehmed the Conqueror in 874/1469 to further explain some implicit ideas in Fanārī's *Misbāh al-ʿuns* and to make it easier to understand. Besides taking Fanārī's *Misbāh al-ʿuns* as the fundamental source, Izniqī also followed his method of explanation and attempted to summarize it.

Similarities between *Misbāh al-ʿuns* and *Faṭḥu Miftāḥ al-ghayb* are not only methodological but also textual. Textual similarities between these two commentaries can be seen in direct quotations Izniqī took from Fanārī. As a matter of fact, the commentator frequently adds Fanārī's interpretation of a passage from *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* and cites the quotations Fanārī makes from muhaqqiqs like Qunawī and Ibn al-ʿArabī. He often repeats the same words in these citations and makes an additional interpretation, if he sees it necessary. This is the style used in *Faṭḥu Miftāḥ al-ghayb* as well.

2.3. Commentary by Ahmad İlāhî: *Mawājīd al-dzawq bi-lā-rayb*

Ahmad İlāhî's commentary⁴⁷ is one of the commentaries written upon Mehmed the Conqueror's request.⁴⁸ Its most important difference from other commentaries is that it was written in Persian. By writing a Persian commentary of *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*, Ahmad İlāhî also translated *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* into Persian. As a matter of fact, the commentator first cites a passage of one or two sentences from *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*. Next, he translates it into Persian and adds his comments again in Persian. In some cases, he does not make interpretation but suffices to give Persian transition.⁴⁹ The commentator states that he wrote the work to contribute to the

⁴⁶ For his life see. Reşat Öngören, "Kütübüddinzāde İzniki", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 26 (Ankara: TDV Pub., 2002) 489.

⁴⁷ For his life see. Necdet Tosun, *Bahüddin Nakşebend*, Istanbul: İnsan Pub., 2003), 283.

⁴⁸ See. Ahmad İlāhî, *Mawājīd al-dzawq*, 1^a.

⁴⁹ Ahmad İlāhî, *Mawājīd al-dzawq*, 137^b, 161^a, 162^{a-b}.

knowledge of the haqīqa (truth) of things and of divine secrets.⁵⁰ As in other commentaries, the works cited in *Mawājīd al-dzawq*'s include Qunawī 's works and famous works of Akbarian tradition.

2.4. Commentary by Ahmad b. Abd Allāh Qirimī: *Sharḥ Miftāḥ al-ghayb*

Ahmad b. Abd Allāh Qirimī,⁵¹ who lived during the Mehmed the Conqueror's rule, read Fanārī's *Misbāḥ al-ʿuns* rigorously and largely benefitted from it. Thus, Qirimī directly cites the interpretations of Fanārī on passages he chose from *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*, and directly cites his quotations from various sources in some places. Therefore, this has a lot of common texts with *Misbāḥ al-ʿuns*.⁵²

While Ahmed b. Abd Allāh Qirimī's commentary mostly resembles *Misbāḥ al-ʿuns* in terms of interpreting *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*, the most distinct and perhaps the most important aspect of it is that it enriches Fanārī's commentary with sufistic poems. The authors interspersed couplets which he took mostly from Ibn al-Farid's famous eulogy and partially from Ibn al-'Arabī's *al-Futūḥāt*⁵³ and made use of these couplets in his interpretations. As mentioned here, Qirimī's integration of Ibn al-Farid's poems with the text of *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* means the integration of two important texts of commentaries era, which is also called as the new era in history of sufism. As a matter of fact, in this period *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* and Ibn Farid's *al-Qaṣīda al-tāiyya* are the works on which the highest number of commentaries are written with Qunawī's suggestions. In other words, we can say that with this commentary Qirimī attempted to bring together the main sources of Akbarian thought.

2.5. Commentary by Uthmān Fadlī Atpazārī: *Misbāḥ al-qalb*

The most important feature of Atpazārī⁵⁴ is that it expounded *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* the most succinctly. As a matter of fact, the commentator briefly but clearly explains the passages he took from *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* rather than writing pages of interpretations.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ Ahmad Ilāhi, *Mawājīd al-dzawq*, 8^a.

⁵¹ Mecdī Mehmed Efendi, *Şakâik-ı Nu'maniye ve Zeyilleri*, ed. Abdülkadir Özcan (Istanbul: Çağrı Pub., 1989), 1:101-102.

⁵² Cf. Fanārī, *Misbāḥ al-ʿuns*, 110- Ahmad b. Abd Allah al-Qirimī, *Sharḥ Miftāḥ al-ghayb*, Suleymaniye Lib., Ragıp Paşa, no. 695, 23^b.

⁵³ See. Qirimī, *Sharḥ Miftāḥ al-ghayb*, 16^b, 44^a, 50^a, 83^a, 91^a, 104^a, 150^b, 223^b, 253^a, 281^a.

⁵⁴ To learn more about his life see. Sakıp Yıldız, "Atpazarî Osman Fazlı", Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansikopedisi, vol. 4 (Istanbul: TDV Pub., 1991) 84.

⁵⁵ See. Uthmān Fadlī Atpazārī, *Misbāḥ al-qalb*, Suleymaniye Lib., Reisülküttab, no. 511, 1^b-88^a.

The author does not make lengthy interpretations but focuses on expressing the issue as briefly as possible. In this respect, *Misbāḥ al-qalb* includes plain and brief information compared to the other commentaries, especially to *Misbāḥ al-ʿuns*.

2.6. Commentary by Abd al-Rahmān Rahmī Bursawī: *Sharḥ Miftāḥ al-ghayb*

The most important characteristics of Abd al-Rahmān Rahmī Bursawī's⁵⁶ commentary, one of the sufis who lived in the 18th century, is that it expounded *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* with the unique and brief interpretations just like Atpazārī. When the work is examined, it is seen that the commentator was not inspired from any commentary; he wrote commentary with his unique interpretations by benefiting from Qunawī's works and works of other famous authors in the Akbarian school. Therefore, it can be argued that this is the second most original commentary of *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* following Fanārī's commentary. On the other hand, Abd al-Rahmān Rahmī Bursawī interpreted the issues in *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* without digressing from the main issue. Therefore, the author does not try to explain an issue with its all related issues. When all these issues are taken into consideration, it can be said that Abd al-Rahmān Rahmī Bursawī's commentary is a succinct, unique and original commentary which completely focussed on the interpretation of *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*.

2.7. Anonymous Commentary: *Asrār shuhūd al-ḥāşil min fatḥ al-wujūd*

The author of the work is not known. There is only one copy of the work, which is registered in the Beyazıt Library. The author states that the commentary is of special character as it includes texts both from *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* and from Fanārī's commentary.⁵⁷

In the introduction, the author states that the work was given to Mehmed the Conqueror as a present.⁵⁸ However, there is not any information whether it was written upon Sultan's desire or order.⁵⁹ The work is one of the commentaries

⁵⁶ To learn more about his life see. Bursalı Mehmed Tâhir, *Osmanlı Müellifleri*, ed. F. Yavuz- İ. Özen (Istanbul: Meral Pub., nd.), 1: 263.

⁵⁷ (The author is not known), *Asrār shuhūd al-ḥāşil min fatḥ al-wujūd*, Beyazıt Lib., Veliyyüddin Efendi, no. 1726, 2^a.

⁵⁸ (The author is not known), *Asrar shuhūd*, 1^b.

⁵⁹ As is known, Mehmed the Conquerer admired Qunawī. Historian M. Bayram claims that four commentaries were written during his rule [see Mikail Bayram, "Fatih Sultan Mehmed'de Sadreddin

that made very much use of Fanārī's commentary. After a passage, the author chooses from *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*, he cites Fanārī's comment on that issue and then writes a few words of his interpretations if any. Therefore, this work seems to be a study on Fanārī's commentary.⁶⁰

2.8. Anonymous Commentary: *Sharḥ al-Miftāḥ al-ghayb*

In some studies, it is stated that there is another commentary of *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*.⁶¹ In our study, we revealed that there is an anonymous commentary registered in the catalogues of the Library in the Topkapı Palace (Deposit Treasure, no. 1269). However, we could not see the commentary in the Palace's Library as the authorities did not give the book to us in spite of the fact that we fulfilled all official procedures. Therefore, we have no more information about the work other than its library registration.

CONCLUSION

It is known that theoretical sufism understanding has reached its peak with Ibn al-'Arabī and his successor Sadr al-Dīn al-Qunawī and that the works by these two muhaqqis laid the foundation of this understating. Qunawī arranged Ibn al-'Arabī's ideas and developed a sufism/metaphysics theory from them. At this point, *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* is not only the most important compilation of Qunawī, it is also one of the most favourite source of metaphysics sufism era alongside *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*.

The main aim of *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*, which is one of the two fundamental sources of doctrinal sufism, is to prove the absolute existence of Haqq and to explain His existence with the universe, that is pluralism. The fact that the basic issue in the work is the relation between Haqq-universe caused its content to include a wide range of topics. Many topics like divine names, the levels of existence, the conditions of acquiring authentic marifah, were discussed in *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* succinctly and in a way that lays the methodological foundations of the divine science.

Konevî Hayranlığı", *I. Uluslararası Sadreddin Konevi Sempozyumu Proceedings*, (Konya: Konya Büyükşehir Belediyesi Pub., 2010), 38] however, he does not mention which commentaries they are. Besides Izniqī's and Ahmad İlāhī's commentaries which are known to be written upon Mehmed the Conqueror's request, it is highly possible that this work is one of the four commentaries mentioned.

⁶⁰ Cf. Fanārī, *Miṣbāḥ al-'uns*, 90; (The author is not known), *Asrār shuhūd*, 16^a-16^b.

⁶¹ Ergin, "Sadreddin Al-Kunavi ve Eserleri", 69.

However, it must be noted that characteristic of *Miftāh al-ghayb* which makes it important in history of sufism is that it established principles that can be seen as criteria in every field of sufism and that it attempted to lay foundations for the development of the divine science as a discipline.

The fact that *Miftāh al-ghayb* has contributed to the transformation in history of sufism, its intensive content and succinct and lexiphanic style has made it the subject of many commentaries since as early as the foundation of the Ottoman State. Thanks to these commentaries the first of which was written by Fanārī, who is the one of the earliest sheikhs al-Islam and mudarrises and founder of Ottoman idea, Sadr al-Dīn al-Qunawī's ideas and methodology was introduced to the Ottoman intellectual life and became widespread. In addition to Fanārī's commentary, the commentaries of the other Ottoman thinkers and intellectuals whose names we have mentioned above also contributed to the better understanding of Akbarian-Qunawī ideas. These commentaries carefully explained the issues Qunawī expressed for the first time in history of sufism. However, the one written by Fanārī, which is the first and most voluminous commentary, has a relatively special position among the other commentaries of *Miftāh al-ghayb* because it directly affected almost all *Miftāh al-ghayb* interpretations and shaped them in terms of methods and content. In sum, *Miftāh al-ghayb*, which is one of the basic texts of history of sufism, was expounded by Ottoman thinkers who lived between the 15th and the 19th centuries. Thanks to these commentaries, Akbarian ideas were introduced to the Ottoman intellectual life and formed its foundation. In general Turkish thinking and in particular Ottoman thinking were shaped around these ideas and developed their unique identities.

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