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The Classification of *Kashf* as a Source of Knowledge in Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī's Thought

This study examines the epistemological concept of *kashf* (unveiling) in the Akbarian school through the commentary of Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī (d. 751/1350), one of the most influential early commentators on Ibn 'Arabī's (d. 638/1240) *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*. As a central transmitter of Akbarian metaphysics rooted in the madrasa milieu of early Ottoman Anatolia, Qayṣarī occupies a pivotal position in the systematization and consolidation of the school. Despite this significance, his conceptualization of *kashf* has received little dedicated analysis in modern scholarship, which has tended to focus on Ibn 'Arabī himself. This study addresses this gap by offering a focused examination of Qayṣarī's epistemological framework of unveiling.

Central attention is given to the seventh introduction (*muqaddima*) of Qayṣarī's *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, in which he formulates a systematic typology of unveiling as an epistemological concept. *Kashf* is defined linguistically as the removal of a veil and technically as the disclosure of hidden realities. Qayṣarī differentiates between *kashf ma'nawī* (pertaining to intelligible meaning) and *kashf ṣūwarī* (pertaining to form). Within the latter, he identifies five sensory modalities—visual, auditory, olfactory, tactile, and gustatory—each illustrated by prophetic traditions that serve to exemplify distinct modes of epistemic reception. This classification reflects an attempt to articulate unveiling not merely as an inward mystical event but as a structured epistemological process with identifiable phenomenological registers. Within this framework, *kashf* appears as an epistemic modality that integrates symbolic and sensory forms of unveiling.

The study further outlines how Qayṣarī incorporates this typology within the exegetical framework of his *sharḥ* and thereby sheds light on the broader metaphysical architecture of his commentary. In doing so, the commentary itself emerges not merely as a vehicle of transmission but as a site of systematic elaboration and conceptual refinement. By highlighting the conceptual precision of Qayṣarī's account, this analysis shows how his writings contributed to the intellectual consolidation of the Akbarian school and facilitated its integration into the scholarly culture of the early Ottoman period.



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Mehmet Akif Aydın completed his B.A. and M.A. in Islamic Theology at the University of Osnabrück, Germany. Since October 2024, he has been a research associate at the Institute of Islamic Studies at Freie Universität Berlin. Since February 2025, he has been working on his PhD project examining *kashf* as a Sufi epistemological concept within the Akbarī school. His research focuses on Islamic intellectual history, especially on epistemological frameworks and processes of conceptualization. His most recent publication is his award-winning first monograph based on his M.A. thesis, *Möglichkeit metaphysischer Erkenntnis auf Grundlage der Vernunft* (Possibility of Metaphysical Knowledge on the Basis of Reason), published in 2024 by Springer Nature as part of the BestMasters series.