

THE METHODOLOGY AND RESOURCES OF IBN NUH AL-QAWSI THROUGH HIS ONLY BOOK ON THE BEHAVIOR OF THE PEOPLE OF MONOTHEISM

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Summary

Ibn Nuh al-Qawsi is considered one of the leading intellectual figures of the sixth century AH, leaving a clear mark in his book. It represents an important document for understanding the intellectual landscape of that period. Ibn Nuh's approach to behavioral issues reflected his own thoughts and opinions, and he formulated a clear vision of monotheism. Ibn Nuh did not receive sufficient study and research from later scholars and researchers, as his texts held intellectual value. He was not merely a transmitter of knowledge and science, but rather a researcher of the truths of his time, relying on the Holy Quran and the pure Prophetic Sunnah. His approach relied on combining tradition and reason, frequently citing Quranic verses and Prophetic hadiths, as well as the opinions of many scholars who preceded him. He also frequently included philosophical and theological references, confirming his extensive knowledge of the sources authored by scholars who preceded him. This perhaps reflects his openness to the intellectual and scientific schools of his time, highlighting his ability to employ these texts and add to them in a manner consistent with the ongoing development of scientific and intellectual life.

Keywords: Methodology and Resources - Ibn Nuh al-Qawsi - The Book of Monotheism - Behavior of the People of Monotheism

Introduction

Ibn Nuh al-Qawsi is considered one of the leading intellectual figures of the sixth century AH. He left a clear mark in his book, which represents an important document for understanding the intellectual landscape of that period. Ibn Nuh's approach to behavioral issues reflected his own thoughts and opinions, formulating a clear vision of monotheism. Ibn Nuh did not receive sufficient study and research from researchers and scholars who came after him. His texts held intellectual value. He was not merely a transmitter of knowledge and science, but rather a researcher of the truths of his time, relying on the Holy Quran and the pure Prophetic Sunnah. His approach relied on combining transmission and reason, frequently citing Quranic verses and Prophetic hadiths, as well as the opinions of many scholars who preceded him. He also frequently included philosophical and theological references, confirming his great knowledge of the sources authored by scholars who preceded him. Perhaps this reflects his openness to the intellectual and scientific schools of his time, highlighting his ability to employ these texts and add to them in a manner consistent with the ongoing development of scientific and intellectual life.

Ibn Nuh focused on the applied scientific aspect, emphasizing in his style the importance of scrutiny, observation, and analysis, relying on honesty and sincerity, making his book an important source for studying the scientific dimension, far removed from theological and theoretical debate. His style combined preaching and education with analysis in his appeal to hearts and minds. This dual style revealed... The flexibility of his approach. His approach was through the method of reasoning in dealing with intellectual issues, and he revealed to me its most prominent resources, specifying them in the Qur'an, Sunnah, heritage, philosophy and theology. Therefore, his approach was balanced between rootedness and intellectual depth, and he provided a comprehensive vision in granting through clarity of purpose. This scholarly personality combined text and experience, and between Sharia and taste in order to reach an intellectual specificity that made him distinguished in his time, which deserves further study and attention from students of Islamic thought in general. He gave his texts through this book, contributing to the revival of the Arab-Islamic heritage.

Chapter One: Methodology for Compiling the Book "The Unique One in the Conduct of the People of Monotheism"

Section One: History of Compilation

In this book, the author compiled the deeds and virtues of saints, gnostics, people of perfection, and the righteous into a luminous system of upright conduct. This system serves as a guide for the servant on his path to God, enabling him to recognize the means to enter the Presence of the Master, attain contentment, and attain the purity of servitude, distancing himself from the temptations and dangers of this world. Whoever deviates from the path of the people of God Almighty has been deprived of goodness, and his deprivation may lead to loss and destruction.

This book is part of the archives of the Egyptian National Library. We have copied, verified and corrected it, numbered it and detailed its topics and titles to facilitate its use. We have also strengthened the verses with their surahs and extracted the hadiths from their sources and commented on some topics without intending to be counted, but rather according to what God has revealed to us during reading and teaching. We have also provided biographies of the notables and explained some strange words and prepared an introductory introduction that deals with the concept of guardianship and the saints with a translation of the author of the book, A Pillar for the Righteous.⁽¹⁾ And our Sheikh Ibn Nuh al-Qawsi wrote his book (Al-Wahid fi Suluk Ahl al-Tawhid) at the end of the seventh century AH⁽²⁾. I started researching this book in 2004, and God completed it for us in 2022. God is the Grantor of success in what is right, and with His permission, what is desired will be achieved. From Him comes success in what is good and beneficial for His servants. Everything with Him has a measure and an appointed time. May God's prayers and peace be upon our master Muhammad, his family, and all his companions.⁽³⁾

The Second Section: Motives for Writing

In the first ten days of Rabi' al-Awwal of the year 708 AH, a dear and generous friend in Alexandria asked me to compile for him a collection of stories from those I had lived with, accounts of those I had met, and what they had told me about themselves and what they had told me about others, including righteous saints, the poor, the wayfarers, scholars, gnostics, those with special circumstances, those who follow the path of piety, asceticism, integrity, and worship, those who direct their hearts to God, and those who are knowledgeable and open-minded. He also asked me about the stories I had heard about the poles, the substitutes, the pegs, and the illiterate in various regions, the caliphs and imams in various positions and stations, and what they had conveyed to

me about themselves and what they had narrated about others, as well as those who had transcended those stages to reach the end of night and day. He also asked me about the reality of disposition, recognition, and definition, so that this would be a reason for his longing for God Almighty, for guiding the wayfarers, and for strengthening and realizing the knowledge of the gnostics.⁽⁴⁾

And my fear was that this path and other paths of investigation would disappear and that those who perceive the outward appearance of worldly life would think that what had passed and ended in ancient times, or that the owners of theoretical sciences would believe that it was nothing but something that ended or was glimpsed briefly and then disappeared, so they would limit themselves to what they think through their narrow thinking and measure their reality by what was in the past, without truly understanding the essence of those profound experiences that transcended the limits of time and they would strike examples of all kinds of impossibilities and turn away from the truth with what is permissible to it of falsehood and not return to it in the immediate or the deferred, so you would see him, out of bad opinion, turn and chant and say:

As for the tents, they are like their tents.

And I see the women of the neighborhood other than her women⁽⁵⁾

Even if what the speaker said is true, it is a statement of truth intended to be false. Furthermore, among the motivations behind writing this book by our Sheikh Ibn Nuh al-Qawsi were personal motives, the goal of enriching the Arab-Islamic library with the authenticated historical narratives it contains.

The third requirement: The artistic style of the book

Ibn Nuh al-Qawsi's book includes two parts. The first part contains much poetry and public life in its various aspects, focusing on religious, social, political, and other aspects ⁽⁶⁾. We note that he had other poetry that differed from the poetry mentioned in Al-Wahid's book. On this basis, some described him and said, "He has beautiful poetry" ⁽⁷⁾ ".And he had hair ⁽⁸⁾ "If we ponder Al-Safadi's phrase "who had poetry," we would understand his intention behind the imperfect verb, as Ibn Nuh's poetry has not reached us in full, like that of other poets. This matter can be explained through several possibilities that are clear from medieval studies, and each possibility is based on evidence that supports its validity. One of these possibilities is that Ibn Nuh Al-Qawsi spent most of his life in "Qaws," a city with a prominent scientific and religious status in Upper Egypt, but it was not close to the literary centers that were teeming with historians and narrators interested in documenting poetry and the history of writers. Because of this geographical distance, his literary production was not the focus of attention of historians and critics who focused on major cultural centers such as Cairo, Damascus, and Baghdad.⁽⁹⁾

Another possibility relates to his personal nature and behavior, as many Sufis and ascetics were inclined towards isolation and staying away from literary gatherings where poets and intellectuals gathered. Perhaps he believed that his preoccupation with literature and poetry might distance him from the path of Sufism and Islamic knowledge, which is a direction followed by many scholars and jurists of his time who preferred to focus on jurisprudence and Sufism over being occupied with literature and poetry.⁽¹⁰⁾

And if the expression is correct, it is far from the spotlight, or because, like many Sufis, he had withdrawn from the company of writers, and on the other hand, people were distracted from his poetry by the sensual image that other poets were depicting, or perhaps he left a collection of poetry and went away, or departed with what went away from the poetry of the people of Upper Egypt and their writings, or he did not

care about his poetry and was not satisfied with being described as a poet. Perhaps the greatest evidence of that is what we saw in his only book, that he did not care much about society's view of poets in his time.⁽¹¹⁾

In addition, his poetry may not have been of a style that appealed to the general taste of his time. The literary environment at that time tended to celebrate poetry that relied on sensory imagery and linguistic brilliance, which was what other poets who were widely accepted were famous for. While Ibn Nuh al-Qawsi's poetry may have had an educational or ascetic character, which made it less popular among the people. It is also possible that he wrote a poetry collection, but it was lost over time, as were many of the literary works and compositions written in Upper Egypt, due to the conditions of preservation and documentation, which were not of the same quality as witnessed in the major cultural centers recently. There is a possibility that Ibn Nuh al-Qawsi himself was not interested in highlighting his poetry or being recognized as a poet. Perhaps he saw that his preoccupation with jurisprudence and Sufism was more important, so he viewed poetry as secondary, and perhaps he was not satisfied with being described as a poet. The evidence for this is that in the book *Al-Wahid*, he was not very interested in attributing some poems to himself, as appears in some manuscript copies. This may also be attributed to the view of society towards poets in his time, as some jurists Scholars avoid affiliating themselves with poetry due to the negative perceptions associated with it in some religious and scientific circles.⁽¹²⁾

All these factors combined may explain why Ibn Nuh al-Qawsi's poetry did not have a prominent presence in the literary arena despite his great scientific and religious standing. Perhaps the same reason led one of the jurists and religious scholars to say And I lose interest in poetry if it is my nature

You are not generous with what people like

The noble seal refuses to let me return it

So I drive him away from my sight and I will defend him⁽¹³⁾

Fourth Section: The Importance of the Book

The book "*Al-Wahid fi Suluk Ahl al-Tawhid*" by Ibn Nuh al-Qawsi has a distinguished position in the Arab-Islamic library in general, and is of great importance to specialists due to the unique information it contains about the regions of Egypt in detail, covering various aspects of public life. Accordingly, al-Qawsi focused in his book on some of the poetry that is the only source for the poetry we have⁽¹⁴⁾.

What was mentioned in *Al-Wahid*'s book is only some of his poetry, which is consistent with the themes of its author, and the greatest evidence of the existence of that is the verses that Al-Adfawi narrated in *Al-Tali* that were not mentioned in *Al-Wahid*'s book, such as his saying about the Holy Kaaba:

Let me dust my forehead with its dust

And I kiss the thresholds of its doors

A cheek, I saw the full moon under her veil

I robbed the men of the neighborhood of their hearts

Everyone is epileptic without lifting her veil⁽¹⁵⁾

And he said:

I declare that abandoning love is a sin

In my religion, he who does not love is sinful

Taste the bitterness of love on my behalf

It is sweet and the sweetness of love is sweet

Every heart that has no one in it

A virginal longing, what kind of heart is that?⁽¹⁶⁾

We note that this is the only book that studies Sufism and their miracles in Egypt specifically and other countries, and it showed us the path of worship to him. This reference is considered a full record of the spiritual, literary and social life in Egypt, as it mentioned a large number of Sufi men who came to the era and settled in Upper Egypt, some of whom he heard about but did not see, and some of whom he saw and mingled with. Among those he heard about but did not see are Sayyid Abd al-Rahim al-Qanawi, Sayyid Abu al-Hajjaj al-Aqsari and others. As for those who saw them and heard from them, such as Abu al-Abbas al-Mulatham and his Sheikh Abd al-Aziz al-Munawi, he included in his book, which expressed their lives in an extensive discussion.⁽¹⁷⁾

Fifth Section: His Methodology for Documenting Personalities

Ibn Nuh al-Qawsi did not address the methodology he followed in his only book, *On the Conduct of the People of Monotheism*, the subject of our study. However, through a careful study, we discovered the extent of the great scholarly effort he expended in gathering the scattered information and organizing and arranging it. We note that Ibn Nuh reinforced his discussion of the personalities he mentioned with verses from the Holy Qur'an⁽¹⁸⁾.

Many scholars and authors have mentioned similar words when talking about the characters mentioned in their books, including Al-Zarkashi. He begins his words by saying Al-Kharqi, and he cites a known source to indicate his explanation.⁽¹⁹⁾

Al-Qawsi began his talk about the people as he narrated from Sheikh Abu Al-Abbas Al-Azfi⁽²⁰⁾. He was a great figure in Morocco, he visited many places and he continues with this approach and differs from others when he talks about it.⁽²¹⁾ Speaking about other personalities, Sheikh Yaish bin Mahmoud began by telling me⁽²²⁾: Sheikh Alam Al-Din Ibn Hareesa narrated on the authority of his Sheikh, therefore it was said that the Sheikh's son, his wife, and his servant will not succeed.⁽²³⁾ Al-Qawsi's method and style in presenting the characters mentioned in his book is that he mentions details about the name, nickname, title, birth, sheikhs, students, writings, and places of their burial, and he supports that with the noble hadiths of the Prophet⁽²⁴⁾. As the Prophet Muhammad, may God bless him and grant him peace, said: "If you did not sin, God would replace you with another people who would sin and then seek His forgiveness, and He would forgive them"⁽²⁵⁾. Al-Qawsi also recorded the names of people and the words that were ambiguous, thus protecting him from the dangers of misprinting and distortion, which are the greatest plagues in the history of Arabic documentation⁽²⁶⁾. This matter is something that cannot be measured by analogy, because there is nothing before it that indicates it, and nothing after it that confirms it.⁽²⁷⁾ He surrounded himself with the stories he heard or witnessed the events of himself about all the people, even most of them, who were mentioned in his book. He mentions the issue he heard or witnessed and the name of its narrator or who was with him in the scenes. He was helped in that by long practice, strong memory and sharp understanding because these matters contain difficulties in controlling the texts and transmitting them despite their abundance. However, he excelled in that, which gave his book the desire among others to read and follow it.⁽²⁸⁾

Section Six: Sources of the Book

"The Unique Book on the Behavior of the People of Monotheism" is a book that focuses on aspects of monotheism and correct Islamic behavior based on the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah. In terms of sources, it can be said that the book relies primarily on:

First: The Holy Quran:

Ibn Nuh al-Qawsi cited a number of verses from the Holy Quran in his discussion of his book, such as his argument for correct behavior. God Almighty says: "Does He not know who created, while He is the Subtle, the Acquainted?" (14)⁽²⁹⁾ He also provided evidence in the chapter on repentance, in which God Almighty said: "And tell the believing women to reduce [some] of their vision and guard their private parts and not to display their adornment except that which appears thereof and to draw their veils over their chests and not display their adornment except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands' fathers, their sons, their sons of men, or their wives' sons." their husbands, or their brothers, or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women, or those their right hands possess, or male attendants other than those having desire, or children who have not attained knowledge of women's private parts. Nor should they stamp their feet so that it may be known What they hide of their adornment. And repent to Allah all of you, O believers, that you may succeed .⁽³⁰⁾ The Holy Quran also guides Muslims in their daily behavior, whether in worship, dealings with people, or the morals and values they should adhere to. It provides clear rules that encourage justice, benevolence, honesty, trustworthiness, tolerance, and other virtues that strengthen social bonds and advance Islamic society. In addition, the Holy Quran represents the final authority for legislation, as it derives from it the legal rulings that regulate the life of Muslims in terms of expressions and transactions. It is thus the primary source upon which Muslims rely to know what is permissible and what is forbidden, what is obligatory upon them, and what is forbidden to avoid.

Second: The Noble Prophetic Hadith:

Ibn Nuh al-Qawsi explained some of his narrations in his book and on several topics, drawing on a collection of Prophetic Hadiths, including asceticism: The Prophet Muhammad, may God bless him and grant him peace, said: "Renounce the world and

God will love you, and renounce what is in people's hands and people will love you".

.⁽³¹⁾ And as it was said, "O David, as for your asceticism in this world, you have hastened comfort for yourself. As for your devotion to Me, you have found strength in Me. So ~~And, His evidence from poetry~~ have you been hostile to an enemy in Me⁽³²⁾ ""?

Ibn Nuh al-Qawsi supported a large number of his narrations, which he included in his book "Al-Wahid fi Suluk Ahl al-Tawhid" (The One Who Speaks of the Monotheists), with a large collection of his own poetry and the poetry of others to further clarify the picture. It has been said that asceticism is abandoning everything other than God Almighty, and this is the reality of asceticism. Although it is true that there is nothing to abandon, it only abandons what is not one's, as has been said:

I will take off my virginity in your love

With your help, not my help or my strength

And I leave the universe so that I do not see it or

The creation created you and the command is your command

What am I if I am not from ruins?

Fourth: Trustworthiness in Transmission:

"Sheikh Yusuf ibn al-Abid, a neighbor of his, told me: 'He lived in a place near me called Dar al-Hadqa, and he was in the same condition day and night. He did not seek shade from the sun during the day or from the cold at night.' I asked the judge: 'What is the condition of someone who is judged by the same judgments as people of reason?' He replied: 'Sometimes he would read the Qur'an and play chess. How could someone of this stature not understand what he was supposed to understand?' I said: 'Everything that was preserved in the mind before the mind was hidden remains imprinted in a mirror after the mind was hidden. You would see him act out of habit, not out of reason.'⁽³³⁾ ""

Conclusion

After completing our research, entitled "The Methodology and Resources of Ibn Nuh al-Qawsi in His Unique Book on the Conduct of the People of Monotheism," a set of conclusions became clear to us, which we summarize as follows:

1. Where does Nuh al-Qawsi rank among the most prominent scholars of the seventh century AH?
2. He based his views on Quranic verses and the noble Prophetic hadiths.
3. He addressed the views of many scholars who guided him along the path of transmission, addressing them with rational logic.
4. His approach was balanced between legal deference and intellectual depth.
5. He included philosophical and theological references, but they were distinguished by clarity and precision of meaning.
6. He combined intellectual texts with real-life experiences, and his ideas were characterized by honesty and scholarly integrity.
7. His readings of the texts he dealt with contributed to reviving a rich heritage that offers advanced human solutions and concepts.

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