By Imam Abu Ibrahim Isma'il ibn Yahya ibn Isma'il al-Muzani (175–264 A.H.) May Allah have mercy on him.

Sharh As-Sunnah means Explanation of the Sunnah. This is an important matn because it teaches the foundations of the belief of Ahlus-Sunnah and explains the correct Islamic Aqeedah in a clear and organized way. It warns against false beliefs and newly introduced ideas in the religion. Imam al-Muzani was a well-known scholar and one of the leading students of Imam ash-Shafi'i. This book teaches about Allah, Qadar, the Angels, Adam عليه السلام, Iman, the Qur'an, Allah's Attributes, death, the grave, the Day of Judgement, Paradise, the Companions and important acts of worship. Learning these lessons helps a Muslim understand the correct Aqeedah, follow the Sunnah, stay away from false beliefs and remain firm upon the truth. Shaykh Ahmad ibn Yahya an-Najmi, may Allah have mercy on him, explains this treatise in his commentary. These lessons are taught upon the Quran and Sunnah as understood by the Salaf (Pious Predecessors) of this Ummah.

Introduction to Tawheed

Tawheed is the most important knowledge we can learn. It is the greatest and noblest subject to study because it teaches us about Allah and how to worship Him correctly. A person who truly believes in Tawheed and lives according to it will be saved from Jahannam by the mercy of Allah. Allah created the jinn and mankind for Tawheed which means that we were created to worship Allah alone. Tawheed is a cause of success in this life and in the Hereafter. The scales were created, the sky was raised and the earth was spread for Tawheed and the worship of Allah alone.

What Is Tawheed?

The Arabic root letters of Tawheed are:

و ح د

The word وَحَّدَ means to make something one or to single something out.

Linguistically: Tawheed means to make something one without giving it any equal and to single something out.

Technically: Tawheed means to single out Allah alone in everything that belongs only to Him. This includes His Lordship, worshipping Him alone and His Names and Attributes. So Tawheed means

believing that Allah alone is our Lord, Allah alone deserves all worship and Allah has His perfect Names and Attributes.

Three Categories of Tawheed

1. Tawheed of Lordship (تَوْحِيدُ الرُّبُوبِيَّةِ): This means believing that Allah alone is the Creator, Provider and Controller of everything. For example, Allah alone created the heavens and the earth. Allah alone gives life and death and Allah alone provides for His creation.

2. Tawheed of Worship (تَوْحِيدُ الْأُلُوهِيَّةِ): This means singling out Allah alone in all acts of worship. For example, we pray to Allah alone, make Dua to Allah alone, rely upon Allah and worship Him alone. We do not direct acts of worship to anyone besides Allah.

3. Tawheed of Allah's Names and Attributes (تَوْحِيدُ الْأَسْمَاءِ وَالصِّفَاتِ): This means believing in the Names and Attributes of Allah that are mentioned in the Quran and Sunnah in the correct way. For example, Allah is Ar-Rahman (الرَّحْمَنُ), the Most Merciful and Allah is As-Sami (السَّمِيعُ), the All-Hearing. Tawheed was not invented by later scholars. It is the message that Allah sent all the Prophets with. Scholars use these three categories to organize and explain what is already taught in the Quran and Sunnah. Therefore Tawheed and Shirk must be understood from the Quran and Sunnah and not from personal opinions.

Is Tawheed Mentioned in the Quran?

Ibn al-Qayyim explained that every Surah in the Quran contains Tawheed. In fact every verse in the Quran contains Tawheed, gives proof for Tawheed or calls people to Tawheed.

1st Type: Some verses give us information about the Names and Attributes of Allah or the Actions of Allah. This is called Tawheed of knowledge and information. We must believe everything Allah has told us about Himself.

2nd Type: Some verses call us to worship Allah alone without giving Him any partners and to leave everything that is worshipped besides Allah. This is the Tawheed of worshipping Allah and seeking Him alone.

3rd Type: Some verses contain commands and prohibitions. They teach us to obey Allah's commands and stay away from what Allah has prohibited. These are from the rights of Tawheed.

4th Type: Some verses tell us about the people of Tawheed and the rewards Allah has prepared for them.

5th Type: Some verses tell us about the people of Shirk, what can happen to them in this life and about their punishment in the next life.

Therefore the whole Quran includes these types of Tawheed. [Madaarij As-Salikeen, Vol. 3, Page 450]

Words That Show Tawheed

Words in the Quran such as أَحَدٌ and وَاحِدٌ teach us about Allah being One.

First Verse: Allah says:

"Or were you witnesses when death approached Jacob, when he said to his sons, 'What will you worship after me?' They said, 'We will worship your God and the God of your fathers, Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac, one God. And we are Muslims [in submission] to Him.'" [Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 133]

Ibn Katheer explained the words إِلَٰهًا وَاحِدًا, "one God", to mean that Allah is made One in worship. In simple words, Allah alone must be worshipped.

Second Verse: Allah says:

"And Allah has said, 'Do not take for yourselves two deities. He is but one God, so fear only Me.'" [Surah An-Nahl, verse 51]

Imam At-Tabari explained the words إِلَٰهًا وَاحِدًا, "one God", to mean that Allah is made One in His worship and His Lordship. This means Allah alone is our Lord and Allah alone deserves our worship. [Jami' al-Bayaan fi Ta'weel Al-Quran]

Third Verse: Allah says:

"They have certainly disbelieved who say, 'Allah is the third of three.' And there is no god except one God. And if they do not desist from what they are saying, there will surely afflict the disbelievers among them a painful punishment." [Surah Al-Ma'idah, verse 73]

This verse teaches us that Allah is One. Allah has no partners and no one else deserves to be worshipped with Him.

Is Tawheed in the Sunnah?

Yes. Tawheed is also clearly taught in the Sunnah.

Sunnah means: The statements and actions of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, things that happened in front of him that he approved of and his physical and personal qualities.

1. Hadeeth of Ibn Abbas: Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنهما reported that when the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم sent Muadh ibn Jabal رضي الله عنه to Yemen he told him:

"You will go to the People of the Book. Let the first thing that you call them to be to make Allah One."

يُوَحِّدُوا اللَّهَ

[Saheeh Al-Bukhari]

The words "make Allah One" come from the same Arabic root as Tawheed. The Arabic word used here is a present tense verb. This teaches us that making Allah One is not something that has a time limit. A Muslim must always worship Allah alone.

2. Hadeeth of Ibn Abbas: Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنهما also reported that the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم told Muadh ibn Jabal رضي الله عنه:

"You are going to the People of the Book. When you come to them call them to the oneness of Allah."

[Saheeh Al-Bukhari]

This teaches us that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم told Muadh رضي الله عنه to begin by calling people to Tawheed.

3. Hadeeth of Ibn Umar: Ibn Umar رضي الله عنهما reported that the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

"Islam is built upon five: that Allah is made One, establishing the prayer, paying the Zakah, fasting Ramadan and Hajj."

[Saheeh Muslim]

This narration directly connects Islam with making Allah One.

4. Hadeeth of Ibn Umar: Ibn Umar رضي الله عنهما reported that the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

"Islam is built upon five: testifying that there is no god except Allah and that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger, establishing the prayer, paying the Zakah, performing Hajj to the House and fasting Ramadan."

[Saheeh Al-Bukhari and Saheeh Muslim]

The first foundation mentioned is لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ, Laa ilaaha illa Allah: There is no one worthy of worship except Allah.

5. Hadeeth of Ibn Umar: Another narration from Ibn Umar رضي الله عنهما mentions that Islam is built upon five and begins with worshipping Allah and rejecting everything worshipped besides Him.

[Saheeh Muslim]

From these narrations we understand that worshipping Allah alone is Tawheed.

Tawheed in the Statements of the Salaf

The Salaf are the Companions and the early generations of Muslims who came after them.

The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

"The best of you are my generation, then those who follow them, then those who follow them."

[Saheeh Al-Bukhari]

Their understanding of Tawheed came from the Quran and Sunnah.

Jaabir ibn Abdullah رضي الله عنه: Jaabir described the Hajj of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and explained that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم began his Hajj by declaring Tawheed in the Talbiyah:

لَبَّيْكَ اللَّهُمَّ لَبَّيْكَ، لَبَّيْكَ لَا شَرِيكَ لَكَ لَبَّيْكَ، إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ وَالنِّعْمَةَ لَكَ وَالْمُلْكَ، لَا شَرِيكَ لَكَ

"Here I am, O Allah, here I am. Here I am. You have no partner. All praise, blessings and the kingdom belong to You. You have no partner."

[Saheeh Muslim]

Jaabir رضي الله عنه used the word Tawheed to describe what the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was saying and doing. This shows that the Companions understood that declaring that Allah has no partners is Tawheed.

Hadeeth of the Delegation of Abdul Qais: A group from Abdul Qais came to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم commanded them to believe in Allah alone and asked:

"Do you know what is meant by believing in Allah alone?"

They replied:

"Allah and His Messenger know best."

The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم explained:

"To testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and Muhammad is Allah's Messenger."

[Saheeh Al-Bukhari]

This teaches us that believing in Allah alone includes believing that only Allah has the right to be worshipped.

Ataa ibn Abi Rabah

Ataa ibn Abi Rabah was from the Tabi'un. The Tabi'un were Muslims who learned from the Companions. He was also a Mufassir which means a scholar who explains the Quran.

Allah says:

"And whoever denies the faith, his work has become worthless, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers." [Surah Al-Ma'idah, verse 5]

Ataa ibn Abi Rabah explained that faith or Iman in this verse means Tawheed.

[Tafseer At-Tabarani]

How the Scholars Explained Tawheed

The scholars of Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah explained Tawheed through the statement:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

Laa ilaaha illa Allah

There is no one worthy of worship except Allah.

Imam Ad-Darimi said that the explanation of Tawheed in this Ummah is:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ

Laa ilaaha illa Allah, Muhammadur Rasulullah. There is no one worthy of worship except Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. [Naqd or Ar-Rad ala Bishr al-Mirrisi, Vol. 1, Page 152]

Imam Al-Ajuri said that Tawheed is to say:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

Laa ilaaha illa Allah with certainty in your heart. [Kitaab Ash-Shariah, Vol. 2, Page 553]

Having certainty means you truly believe it in your heart without doubt.

Why Do We Study Tawheed?

1. Allah created us to worship Him alone. We were created to single out Allah alone in our worship. We pray to Allah alone, make Dua to Him alone and direct our worship to Him alone.

2. Allah does not accept worship without Tawheed. Our worship must be sincerely for Allah alone and cannot be mixed with Shirk.

3. Tawheed is a cause of entering Jannah. A person must learn Tawheed, believe in it and live according to it. A person who dies upon true Tawheed will enter Jannah.

4. Tawheed is a cause of increasing the reward of good deeds. The stronger a person's Tawheed and sincerity to Allah are, the greater the blessings and rewards in their good deeds can be.

5. Tawheed is a cause for sins to be forgiven. Allah may forgive sins because of a person's sincere Tawheed and faith in Him.

6. Tawheed is a cause of guidance and security. Those who truly believe in Allah and protect their Tawheed from Shirk are promised guidance and security.

7. Tawheed is a cause of peace in the heart. Allah places peace and calmness in the hearts of the believers. True belief in Allah helps a believer remain firm and turn to Allah during easy and difficult times.

8. Tawheed is a cause of receiving the Prophet's ﷺ intercession. By the mercy and permission of Allah, the people of sincere Tawheed may receive the intercession of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Two Conditions for Correct Worship

Correct worship requires two conditions:

1. Sincerity to Allah (الْإِخْلَاصُ): All worship must be sincerely for Allah alone. The opposite of sincerity is Shirk. For example, when a person makes Dua they must make Dua to Allah alone and not direct their Dua to someone besides Allah.

2. Following the Prophet (الْمُتَابَعَةُ) ﷺ: We must worship Allah in the way that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ taught us. The opposite is inventing acts of worship that the Prophet ﷺ did not teach. For example, we pray Salah according to the way the Prophet ﷺ taught us. We do not invent a new type of Salah and call it part of Islam. The Prophet ﷺ said: "Whoever does a deed which has not been ordered by us, then it is rejected." [Saheeh Muslim, Hadeeth 1718]

Sincerity without following the Sunnah is not enough. For example, a person may sincerely want to worship Allah but invent a new act of worship that the Prophet ﷺ never taught. Their good intention does not make the invented worship correct. Following the outward Sunnah while directing worship to someone other than Allah is also not enough. For example, a person may perform an act in the correct outward way but direct that worship to someone besides Allah. Both conditions are required. The worship must be sincerely for Allah alone and it must follow the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ is the only person Muslims must completely follow in the religion.

Why We Must Learn About Shirk

We must learn about Shirk so we can recognize it and stay away from it. Allah did not prohibit Shirk without explaining it. The Quran and Sunnah explain its meaning, types and dangers. Shirk is the opposite of Tawheed. Generally, Shirk means giving someone or something a share in something that belongs only to Allah. In worship it means directing an act of worship to someone or something besides Allah. Shirk is divided into Major Shirk and Minor Shirk.

Major Shirk (الشِّرْكُ الْأَكْبَرُ)

Major Shirk is directing an act of worship to someone or something besides Allah. It takes a person outside of Islam. For example, making Dua to the dead and asking them for something that only Allah can do is Major Shirk. Sacrificing an animal as an act of worship for someone besides Allah is another example. Major Shirk causes misguidance, removes security and destroys a person's deeds. If a person dies upon Major Shirk without repenting from it, Allah will not forgive it. It prevents the person who dies upon it from entering Paradise and leads to the Fire. Major Shirk is also the greatest injustice.

Minor Shirk (الشِّرْكُ الْأَصْغَرُ)

Minor Shirk does not take a person outside of Islam but it is still a serious sin. It makes a person's Tawheed and faith weaker and it can become a path that leads towards Major Shirk. One example is showing off in worship. For example, a person begins praying sincerely for Allah but then makes their prayer look better because they notice other people are watching them. This showing off can destroy the part of the worship in which it happens. Another example of Minor Shirk is swearing by someone or something besides Allah such as saying, "I swear by my father." A Muslim should swear by Allah or remain silent.

Hidden Shirk (الشِّرْكُ الْخَفِيُّ)

Shirk can also be hidden because it may be connected to what is inside a person's heart and may not be clear to other people. Showing off in worship is an example. A person may look like they are worshipping Allah while secretly wanting people to see them, praise them or think they are very religious. A Muslim should never feel completely safe from Shirk. Even Ibrahim عليه السلام asked Allah to protect him from Shirk.

Allah says:

"And [mention, O Muhammad], when Abraham said, 'My Lord, make this city [Makkah] secure and keep me and my sons away from worshipping idols.'" [Surah Ibrahim, verse 35] If Ibrahim عليه السلام feared Shirk and asked Allah to protect him from it then we should also fear Shirk, learn about it and ask Allah to protect us from it.

The Prophet ﷺ also taught us to say: "O Allah, I seek refuge in You from associating partners with You knowingly and I seek Your forgiveness for what I do not know." [Musnad Ahmad] This teaches us to ask Allah to protect us from the Shirk we know about and the Shirk we may not recognize.

Final Summary

Tawheed means to single out Allah alone. We believe that Allah alone is our Lord, we worship Allah alone and we believe in Allah's Names and Attributes. Tawheed has three categories: Tawheed of Lordship, Tawheed of Worship and Tawheed of Allah's Names and Attributes. The Quran teaches Tawheed from beginning to end. It teaches us about Allah, calls us to worship Him alone, teaches us to obey His commands, tells us about the rewards for the people of Tawheed and warns us about Shirk. The Sunnah also teaches Tawheed. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم called people to worship Allah alone and taught his Companions to begin their call to others with Tawheed. For worship to be correct it must be sincerely for Allah alone and it must follow the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. We also learn about Shirk so we can recognize it and stay far away from it.

The meaning of Tawheed is clearly shown in:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللهُ

There is no one worthy of worship except Allah. upon The Qur'aan & Sunnah as Understood by the Salaf (Pious Predecessors) of this Ummah,

Bismillah

Bismillah means "In the Name of Allah."

We begin with Bismillah for four reasons:

1. Following the Quran

Allah begins the Quran with Bismillah. This teaches us to begin with the Name of Allah.

2. Following the Prophet ﷺ

When the Prophet ﷺ wrote letters to kings and rulers, he began his letters with Bismillah. We follow his example by beginning with the Name of Allah.

3. Following the scholars

The scholars of Islam followed this practice and began their books and writings with Bismillah. We follow their example when beginning Islamic writings and lessons.

4. Seeking Allah's blessing

We begin with Bismillah to seek Allah's blessing in what we are doing. Saying Bismillah reminds us that all blessings come from Allah and that we depend upon Him.

When we say Bismillah before doing something, the action is understood even if we do not say it. For example, if we say Bismillah before drinking, it means, "In the Name of Allah, I drink." This teaches us to begin good actions with Allah's Name and seek His blessing.

The Basmalah contains three Names of Allah:

1. Allah: The One who alone deserves to be worshipped.
2. Ar-Rahman: The One whose mercy is vast and reaches all of creation.
3. Ar-Raheem: The One who gives special mercy to His believing servants.

We can see Allah's mercy through the many blessings He gives us such as rain, food, water and everything we need for life.

About Imam al-Muzani

His kunyah was Abu Ibrahim. His name was Isma'il ibn Yahya ibn Isma'il ibn 'Amr ibn Muslim al-Muzani al-Misri. He was born in 175 A.H. He was a famous student of Imam ash-Shafi'i and stayed with him for a long time. His teachers included Imam ash-Shafi'i, Ali ibn Ma'bad ibn Shaddad al-Basri, Nu'aym ibn Hammad al-Khuza'i and Asbagh ibn Nafi'. Many students also learned from Imam al-Muzani. The scholars praised Imam al-Muzani for his knowledge, worship and understanding. He wrote many books. Sharhus-Sunnah was one of them. He died in 264 A.H.

Why Imam al-Muzani Wrote This Matn

People asked Imam al-Muzani to explain the beliefs of Ahlus-Sunnah. At that time, people were arguing about Qadar, the Qur'an, the Resurrection, the Judgement, the Scale, the Sirat and seeing Allah in the Hereafter. He wrote this treatise so Muslims could understand the Sunnah clearly, hold firmly to it and stay away from wrong beliefs and new ideas in the religion.

Opening of the Matn

Imam al-Muzani begins by praising Allah. He asks Allah to give the reader Taqwa and help them follow the truth. He explains that Allah is One, perfect and unlike His creation.

Qur'an evidence: Allah teaches that nothing is like Him and He is the All-Hearing, All-Seeing.

Reference: Surah ash-Shura, 42:11

Explanation: Allah has perfect Names and Attributes. Nothing is like Allah.

Qur'an evidence: Allah describes Himself as One and Eternal.

Reference: Surah al-Ikhlas, 112:1-2

Explanation: Allah is One and has no equal. All creation needs Allah. Allah does not need His creation.

1. The Ascendancy of Allah

Imam al-Muzani teaches that Allah is above His Throne in a way that suits His Majesty. Allah is separate from His creation. His knowledge covers everything. Allah knows what is hidden in the heart, what people whisper and everything that happens.

Qur'an evidence: Allah knows the secret movement of the eyes and what the hearts hide.

Reference: Surah Ghafir, 40:19

Explanation: Nothing is hidden from Allah. He knows what people show and what they hide.

Qur'an evidence: Allah knows what the soul whispers.

Reference: Surah Qaf, 50:16

Explanation: Allah knows every person and every hidden thought.

2. Qadar: Pre-Ordainment and Pre-Decree

Qadar means that Allah knew and wrote what would happen before it happened. Nothing happens outside Allah's knowledge and decree. People still make real choices. They choose obedience or sin and they are responsible for what they do. A person cannot use Qadar as an excuse for sin.

Two Wrong Ideas About Qadar

The commentary warns against two wrong ideas. The first is denying Qadar. The second is saying people are completely forced and have no choice. Both ideas are wrong.

Two Types of Allah's Will

The commentary explains two kinds of Allah's Will. One is what Allah allows to happen in creation. The other is what Allah loves and commands. A sin can happen by Allah's decree even though Allah does not love that sin.

Qur'an evidence: Allah does not wrong anyone, even by the weight of an atom.

Reference: Surah an-Nisa, 4:40

Explanation: Allah is perfectly just. People are rewarded or punished for what they choose and do.

3. The Angels

Allah created the Angels to worship and obey Him. They are real. They do not disobey Allah. The Angels have different duties. Some carry the Throne. Some praise Allah around the Throne. Some bring revelation. Some record deeds. Some take souls at death. Some question people in the grave. The commentary also mentions Angels such as Jibril and Mika'il.

Qur'an evidence: The Angels who carry the Throne and those around it praise Allah and ask forgiveness for the believers.

Reference: Surah Ghafir, 40:7

Explanation: The Angels worship Allah and do the jobs Allah gives them.

4. Adam عليه السلام

Allah created Adam عليه السلام by His Hand and placed him in Paradise. Allah told him not to eat from one tree. Shaytan tricked Adam عليه السلام and his wife and Adam عليه السلام ate from the tree. Allah then sent Adam عليه السلام to the earth. His story teaches us about the danger of disobeying Allah, the danger of Shaytan and the reality of Qadar.

Qur'an evidence: Allah told the Angels that He would place a successor on the earth.

Reference: Surah al-Baqarah, 2:30

Explanation: Adam عليه السلام coming to the earth was already known and decreed by Allah.

5. Paradise and Hell

Paradise and Hell are real. Allah already knows who will finally enter Paradise and who will finally enter Hell. People are still responsible for their actions. No one knows what Allah has written for them, so a Muslim must obey Allah and stay away from sin. Paradise and Hell already exist. The people of Paradise will enjoy its rewards. The people of Hell will face its punishment according to Allah's justice.

6. Iman – Faith

Iman means belief in the heart, words of the tongue and actions of the body.

Iman increases with obedience and good deeds. It decreases with sin. Some believers have stronger Iman than others.

A Muslim does not automatically leave Islam because of every sin or major sin. We also do not say that a specific person is definitely in Paradise or Hell unless there is clear evidence.

Qur'an evidence: The Qur'an describes believers increasing in Iman.

Reference: Surah al-Fath, 48:4; Surah at-Tawbah, 9:124

Explanation: Iman can become stronger or weaker.

7. The Qur'an

The Qur'an is the Speech of Allah. It is from Allah and it is not created. The Qur'an is truly the Speech of Allah. It is not the speech of a human being and it is not created.

8. Allah's Attributes

Allah's Words, Power, Names and Attributes are perfect. They are not like the qualities of created beings. Allah has no weakness or defect. We accept the Attributes Allah mentioned about Himself and the Attributes taught by Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. We do not compare Allah to creation and we do not deny His Attributes.

Qur'an evidence: Allah says nothing is like Him and He is the All-Hearing, All-Seeing.

Reference: Surah ash-Shura, 42:11

Explanation: Allah truly has Attributes and nothing is like Him.

The commentary explains that some Attributes describe Allah Himself and some are connected to His actions. All of Allah's Attributes are perfect and suit His Majesty.

9. The Appointed Time of Death

Every person has a set time of death. No one dies before or after the time Allah has written. When a person's time comes, their life in this world ends. Every person should prepare for what comes after death.

Qur'an evidence: No soul knows in which land it will die.

Reference: Surah Luqman, 31:34

Explanation: Only Allah knows the exact time and place of a person's death.

10. Questioning in the Grave

After a person is buried, they will be questioned in the grave about their Lord, religion and Prophet. The grave is part of Barzakh. Barzakh is the life between this world and the Resurrection.

11. The Resurrection and the Reckoning

After people die and their bodies break down, Allah will bring them back to life. Everyone will be gathered before Allah on the Day of Judgement. Their deeds will be shown. Their records will be opened. Their deeds will be weighed. Allah will judge everyone with perfect justice. People will finally be in one of two places: Paradise or Hell.

Qur'an evidence: Allah has recorded what people did even when they forgot it.

Reference: Surah al-Mujadilah, 58:6

Explanation: Allah knows and records every deed. Nothing is forgotten.

Qur'an evidence: The Qur'an describes a Day whose measure is fifty thousand years.

Reference: Surah al-Ma'arij, 70:4

Explanation: The Day of Judgement will be a very serious Day. Allah will judge everyone with justice.

12. Paradise

The people of Paradise will have happiness, honour and blessings. They will never become tired of Paradise and they will never be forced to leave it. The path to Paradise is obedience to Allah and obedience to His Messenger ﷺ.

Qur'an evidence: Those who obey Allah and the Messenger will be with the Prophets, truthful people, martyrs and righteous people.

Reference: Surah an-Nisa, 4:69

Explanation: Obeying Allah and His Messenger ﷺ leads to success in the Hereafter.

13. Seeing Allah in the Hereafter

The believers will see Allah in the Hereafter. They will see their Lord without doubt. Their faces will be bright because of the honour Allah gives them. Seeing Allah will be one of the greatest rewards of Paradise.

Qur'an evidence: Some faces on that Day will be bright and looking toward their Lord.

Reference: Surah al-Qiyamah, 75:22-23

Explanation: The believers will really see Allah in the Hereafter in a way that suits His Majesty.

14. Obedience to Muslim Rulers

Muslims must obey their rulers in what is right. There is no obedience to anyone in sin. The treatise also warns against rebelling because of wrongdoing or oppression. Muslims should turn to Allah, make Tawbah and ask Allah to improve the situation. If a ruler commands a sin, that sinful command is not obeyed.

15. Do Not Rush to Judge Muslims

The treatise warns Muslims not to quickly declare another Muslim outside Islam because of every bad action. It also discusses serious innovations and wrong beliefs. A student should learn these matters carefully and not rush to judge specific people. Major sins do not automatically make every Muslim a disbeliever.

16. The Companions رضي الله عنهم

The treatise honours the Companions of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه is first in virtue after the Prophet ﷺ, then Umar رضي الله عنه, then Uthman رضي الله عنه, then Ali رضي الله عنه. After them are the rest of the ten Companions promised Paradise and then the other Companions. Muslims should love them, mention their good qualities and avoid speaking about the disagreements between them. Allah chose the Companions to be with Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and to support Islam. They should be respected and honoured.

17. Friday Prayer, Prayer Behind Leaders, Hajj and Jihad

Friday Prayer should not be left. The treatise also discusses praying behind Muslim leaders and keeping the public acts of Islam together. It also mentions Hajj and Jihad under Muslim leadership. These matters are connected to Muslim leadership and the unity of the Muslim community.

18. Shortening Prayer and Fasting During Travel

A traveler may shorten the prayers that are shortened in travel. The commentary explains that shortening the prayer is a Sunnah for the traveler. A traveler may also fast or not fast. If fasting becomes too difficult, breaking the fast may be better.

19. Following the Early Imams

Imam al-Muzani says the early Imams agreed on these main beliefs and practices. The Tabi'in followed the Companions and were happy with their way. They did not add new beliefs or complicated ideas to the religion. They followed the guidance they received. The lesson is to follow the Qur'an, Sunnah and the early generations and stay away from new religious beliefs.

20. Obligatory and Sunnah Acts of Worship

At the end of the treatise, Imam al-Muzani reminds us that correct belief should lead to worship and good actions.

Purification

A Muslim should stay clean from impurity and make proper purification for worship.

Salah

A Muslim must pray the obligatory prayers according to their ability. The treatise also mentions Witr, two Rak'ahs before Fajr, the Eid prayers, eclipse prayer and prayer for rain.

Zakah

A Muslim who has enough wealth must pay Zakah according to its rules.

Hajj

Hajj is required for the person who is able to perform it.

Fasting Ramadan

Fasting Ramadan is required for the Muslim who is healthy and able to fast.

21. Stay Away From Major Sins

The treatise tells Muslims to stay away from Haram. It warns against spreading rumours, lying, backbiting, wronging others and speaking about Allah without knowledge.

Qur'an evidence: Allah forbids sinful acts, oppression, Shirk and speaking about Allah without knowledge.

Reference: Surah al-A'raf, 7:33

Explanation: Speaking about Islam without knowledge is serious. A Muslim should learn before speaking.

22. Stay Away From Doubtful Matters

Imam al-Muzani ends by telling Muslims to be careful about their money, food, drink, family and clothing. A Muslim should not follow every desire. A person who keeps going close to Haram may finally fall into it. Staying away from doubtful matters protects the religion. The treatise ends with a Du'a asking Allah for guidance, mercy and continued favour.

Main Lessons to Remember

• Allah is One and nothing is like Him.

• Allah is above His Throne and He knows everything.

• Allah knew and decreed everything. People still make real choices and are responsible for what they do.

• The Angels are real and they obey Allah.

• Adam عليه السلام was created by Allah. His story warns us about sin and Shaytan.

• Paradise and Hell are real.

• Iman includes belief, words and actions. It increases and decreases.

• The Qur'an is the Speech of Allah and is not created.

• Allah's Attributes are perfect and nothing is like Him.

• Death has a set time. The grave, Resurrection, Judgement and Scale are real.

• The believers will see Allah in the Hereafter.

• Muslim rulers are obeyed in what is right. No one is obeyed in sin.

• Do not rush to declare Muslims outside Islam because of sins.

• Love and respect the Companions.

• Follow the early Muslims and do not add new beliefs to Islam.

• Correct belief should lead to Salah, Zakah, fasting, Hajj and good actions.

• Do not speak about Allah or Islam without knowledge.

Detailed Topic Checklist

- Biography of Imam al-Muzani and why he wrote Sharhus-Sunnah.
- Allah's Names and Attributes and the rule that nothing resembles Him.
- Allah above His Throne and His complete knowledge.
- Qadar, Allah's Will, human choice and responsibility.
- The Angels and some of their duties.
- Adam عليه السلام and his coming to the earth.
- Paradise and Hell.
- Definition of Iman and its increase and decrease.
- The Qur'an as the Speech of Allah and not created.
- Allah's Attributes and avoiding comparison with creation.
- Appointed times of death.
- Questioning in the grave and Barzakh.
- Resurrection, Reckoning, records and Scales.
- Paradise and seeing Allah in the Hereafter.
- Obedience to Muslim rulers in what is right and avoiding rebellion.
- Avoiding careless takfir and understanding the ruling of major sins.
- Virtues and order of Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali رضي الله عنهم and respect for all Companions.
- Friday Prayer and community worship under Muslim leadership.
- Travel prayer and fasting during travel.
- Following the early Imams, Companions and Tabi'in.
- Purification, Salah, Zakah, Hajj and fasting Ramadan.
- Recommended prayers mentioned at the end of the treatise.
- Avoiding lies, backbiting, rumours, oppression and speaking about Allah without knowledge.
- Being careful with earnings, food, drink, clothing, family matters and doubtful matters.