1. Author and Book

Author: Imam Abu Ibrahim Isma'il ibn Yahya al-Muzani.

Known as: Imam al-Muzani.

Born: 175 AH.

Died: 264 AH.

Book: Sharh As-Sunnah.

Main purpose: To explain the beliefs of Ahlus-Sunnah clearly and help Muslims stay away from wrong beliefs and new ideas in the religion.

• Imam al-Muzani was a famous student of Imam ash-Shafi'i.

• He was known for knowledge, worship and understanding.

• The book explains important beliefs in a short and organized way.

2. Opening of the Treatise

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

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

Reference: Surah ash-Shura, 42:11.

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

Qur'an evidence: Allah is One and the Eternal.

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

Explanation: All creation needs Allah. Allah does not need His creation.

3. Allah Is Above His Throne

Allah is above His Throne in a way that suits His Majesty. Allah is separate from His creation but His knowledge covers everything. Allah knows what people show, what they hide and what is inside their hearts.

Qur'an evidence: Allah knows the eyes' deceit and what the chests conceal.

Reference: Surah Ghafir, 40:19.

Explanation: Nothing is hidden from Allah.

4. Qadar – Allah's Decree

Qadar means that Allah knew and decreed everything before it happened. Nothing happens outside Allah's knowledge and decree. People still make real choices and are responsible for what they do. A person cannot use Qadar as an excuse for 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.

Exam Point: Do not say people are completely forced. Do not deny Qadar. Both ideas are wrong.

5. Two Types of Allah's Will

The commentary explains two types of Allah's Will.

1. What Allah allows to happen in creation.

2. What Allah loves and commands in the religion.

A sin may happen by Allah's decree even though Allah does not love the sin.

Exam Point: Allah controls creation and people are still responsible for their choices.

6. The Angels

The Angels are real created beings.

Allah created them to worship and obey Him.

• Some Angels 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.

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

Reference: Surah Ghafir, 40:7.

Explanation: The Angels obey Allah and carry out the duties He gives them.

7. Adam عليه السلام

Allah created Adam عليه السلام and placed him in Paradise. Allah told him not to eat from one tree. Shaytan tricked Adam عليه السلام and his wife. Adam عليه السلام ate from the tree and was sent to the earth. Main lesson: Obey Allah and be careful of Shaytan.

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.

8. Paradise and Hell

Paradise and Hell are real. Allah already knows who will finally enter Paradise and who will finally enter Hell. People do not know what is written for them, so they must obey Allah and stay away from sin. Paradise and Hell already exist. Exam Point: Belief in Qadar does not mean we stop doing good deeds.

9. Iman – Faith

Iman means belief in the heart, words of the tongue and actions of the body. Iman increases with obedience and good deeds. Iman 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 do not say a specific Muslim is definitely in Paradise or Hell unless there is clear evidence. Exam Point: Iman is not only in the heart. It includes words and actions.

10. The Qur'an

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

11. Allah's Names and Attributes

Allah's Names and Attributes are perfect. They are not like the qualities of created beings. We accept what Allah says about Himself and what Prophet Muhammad ﷺ taught about Him. We do not compare Allah to creation. We do not deny Allah's Attributes.

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

Reference: Surah ash-Shura, 42:11.

Explanation: Allah has real Attributes but nothing resembles Him.

12. The Appointed Time of Death

Every person has a set time of death. No one dies before or after the time Allah has written. Only Allah knows exactly when and where a person will die. Main lesson: Prepare for death by obeying Allah.

13. The Grave

After a person is buried, they will be questioned in the grave. The grave is part of Barzakh. Barzakh is the life between this world and the Resurrection. Exam Point: Death is not the end.

14. Resurrection and Judgement

Allah will bring all people back to life. Everyone will be gathered before Allah on the Day of Judgement. People's deeds will be shown. Their records will be opened. Their deeds will be weighed. Allah will judge everyone with perfect justice.

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

Reference: Surah al-Mujadilah, 58:6.

Exam Point: Nothing is forgotten by Allah.

15. Paradise

The people of Paradise will have happiness, honour and many blessings. They will never become tired of Paradise. They will never be forced to leave it. The path to Paradise is obedience to Allah and His Messenger ﷺ. Qur'an evidence: The people of Paradise will remain there and will not be removed.

Reference: Surah al-Hijr, 15:48.

16. Seeing Allah in the Hereafter

The believers will see Allah in the Hereafter. They will see their Lord without doubt. Seeing Allah will be one of the greatest rewards of Paradise.

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

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

Explanation: The believers will really see Allah in the Hereafter.

17. Obedience to Muslim Rulers

Muslim rulers are obeyed in what is right. There is no obedience to anyone in sin. If a ruler commands a sin, that sinful command is not obeyed. The treatise warns against rebelling because of wrongdoing or oppression. Muslims should make Tawbah and ask Allah to improve their situation. Exam Point: Obey in what is right. Do not obey anyone in disobedience to Allah.

18. Do Not Rush to Declare Muslims Outside Islam

The treatise warns against quickly declaring Muslims outside Islam because of every bad action. Major sins do not automatically make every Muslim a disbeliever. A student should be careful with serious rulings about specific people. Exam Point: Learn the ruling of the action but do not rush to judge a person without knowledge.

19. The Companions

The Companions of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ must be loved and respected.

Order of the four rightly guided Caliphs:

1. Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه
2. Umar رضي الله عنه
3. Uthman رضي الله عنه
4. Ali رضي الله عنه

After them are the rest of the ten Companions promised Paradise and then the other Companions. Muslims should mention their good qualities and avoid speaking badly about the disagreements that happened between them. Exam Point: Love and respect all the Companions.

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

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

21. Travel

A traveler may shorten the prayer. A traveler may fast or not fast. If fasting becomes very difficult, breaking the fast may be better. Exam Point: Islam gives ease to the traveler.

22. Following the Early Imams

The early Imams agreed on these main beliefs and practices. The Tabi'in followed the Companions. They did not add new beliefs or complicated ideas to the religion. They followed the guidance they received. Main lesson: Follow the Qur'an, Sunnah and the way of the early Muslims.

23. Worship and Obligations

Correct belief should lead to worship and good actions.

• Keep clean from impurity.

• Make proper purification for worship.

• Pray the obligatory prayers.

• Pay Zakah when required.

• Perform Hajj when able.

• Fast Ramadan when healthy and able.

The treatise also mentions Witr, two Rak'ahs before Fajr, Eid prayers, eclipse prayer and prayer for rain.

24. Stay Away From Major Sins

A Muslim must stay away from Haram.

The treatise warns against:

• Spreading rumours.

• Lying.

• Backbiting.

• Wronging other people.

• Speaking about Allah without knowledge.

Exam Point: Learn before speaking about Islam.

25. Stay Away From Doubtful Matters

A Muslim should be careful about money, food, drink, family matters and clothing. Do not follow every desire. A person who keeps going close to Haram may eventually fall into it. Staying away from doubtful matters helps protect the religion.

Final Exam Review

- Allah is One and nothing is like Him.
- Allah is above His Throne and His knowledge covers everything.
- Allah knew and decreed everything. People still make choices.
- The Angels are real and obey Allah.
- Adam عليه السلام was created by Allah and Shaytan is an enemy.
- 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 Names and Attributes are perfect and unlike creation.
- Death, the grave, Resurrection, Judgement and the Scale are real.
- The believers will see Allah in the Hereafter.
- Muslim rulers are obeyed in what is right.
- 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 must lead to Salah, Zakah, fasting, Hajj and good actions.
- Do not speak about Allah or Islam without knowledge.