

Fifty Questions of the Day of Judgment: The Fifty Stations We Must Pass Through

The Fifty Questions of the Day of Judgment and the Roadmap Drawn by Imam Sajjad (Peace Be upon Him)

The Day of Judgment is the arena where our entire life's record is examined – a day when every action, word, and decision we made out of free will and responsibility is evaluated, and we must give a clear answer for each. Because we are free, responsible beings, we cannot remain indifferent to these questions. As Imam Sajjad (Peace be upon him) says in his supplication, “O God, make me do those deeds about which You will question me tomorrow” [1]. This outlook ties our present life directly to the future court of judgment.

According to narrations, on the Day of Judgment, we will face a set of foundational inquiries known as the fifty questions of the Day of Judgment [2]. These questions do not only concern individual acts of worship; they cover diverse spheres of our existence: our relationship with God, our relationship with ourselves, our families, society, and even the way we use divine blessings. In other words, these fifty questions function like successive stations, reviewing our entire life from beginning to end and showing that no part of our life falls outside the circle of accounting and questioning.

The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him and his family) accordingly states that on the Day of Judgment a person will not take a single step until he is asked about his

life, his youth, his wealth, and his relationship with the Ahl al-Bayt-Household of Prophet Muhammad- (Peace be upon them) [3]. This *hadith* demonstrates that the questions of the Day of Judgment are directly tied to the way we live in this world.

Against this backdrop, Imam Zayn al-Abidin's (AS) *Treatise on Rights* offers a vivid picture of how to answer these questions. In that text, the Imam enumerates fifty rights – from the right of God and one's own soul to the rights of body parts, family, neighbors, friends, partners, the needy, and even enemies. Reflecting on this list, we realize that the *Treatise on Rights* is in fact a comprehensive roadmap for responding to the fifty questions of the Day of Judgment. Each "right" implies a corresponding "question" in the divine accounting, and every failure to observe that right means having no answer at that great station.

Therefore, studying the *Treatise on Rights* and making it a practical life program is the very path to a responsible life in this world and readiness for the Day of Judgment. In this article, we aim to show that the fifty rights laid out in Imam Sajjad's (Peace be upon him) *Treatise on Rights* are precisely the fifty questions of the Day of Judgment – questions that determine our eternal fate and for which we must begin preparing today.

The Charter of Imam Sajjad (Peace Be upon Him) for Life and Accountability on the Day of Judgment

The *Treatise on Rights* by Imam Zayn al-Abidin (Peace be upon him) stands as one of the most outstanding written legacies in Islamic ethics, practical jurisprudence, and social relations. This noble text is effectively a comprehensive charter of

individual, familial, and social duties for Muslims and, with its meticulous outlook, covers every dimension of our lives. From the right of God and the rights of one's body parts to the rights of a neighbor, teacher, student, ruler, citizen, and even non-Muslims – all are explained with meaningful order and remarkable coherence in this treatise.

Historically, the primary sources transmitting the *Treatise on Rights* are two early Shiite works: *Tuhaf al-'Uqul* by Ibn Shu'ba al-Harrani (4th century AH) and *Al-Khisal* by Shaykh al-Saduq. Both sources record the text with nearly identical structure. Although some versions list fifty rights and others fifty-one, the key point emerging from these variations is the stability of the treatise's core message – a message that calls us to recognize our responsibilities and adhere to them practically.

From this perspective, the *Treatise on Rights* can be summed up as “the comprehensive charter of responsibilities” – a **text that organizes every sphere of our life, from our connection with God down to our behavior with the smallest member of society, under the logic of accountability**. It is a precise blueprint for ordering our devotional, personal, familial, and social relationships so that no dimension of life is left neglected or unaccounted for. In this treatise, each “right” represents a conscious responsibility that can be subject to questioning and demand.

Within this framework, the *Treatise on Rights* can be seen as a roadmap for the believer's journey from this world to the Hereafter because every responsibility identified in this text logically sets the stage for a question in the court of divine judgment. Just as we will be questioned on the Day of Judgment because of our

free will and responsibility, so too does the *Treatise on Rights* clearly define the boundaries of those very responsibilities. Accordingly, becoming acquainted with the *Treatise on Rights* and striving to implement it in daily life is, in truth, walking the path of preparedness for answering on the Day of Judgment – a path where knowing one’s responsibilities is only the beginning, and adhering to them practically guarantees our bliss in the eternal life.

The Fifty Rights in the *Treatise on Rights*: Key to Understanding and Answering the Fifty Questions of the Day of Judgment

As noted, Imam Zayn al-Abidin’s *Treatise on Rights* is not merely a collection of moral counsels or individual preaching; rather, it is a comprehensive, systematic, and purposeful plan for a responsible life and preparation for answering on the Day of Judgment. In this charter of life, Imam Sajjad (Peace be upon him) enumerates fifty rights, each pertaining to a distinct and essential area of our responsibilities. This deliberate arrangement shows that no significant sphere of our life lies outside the domain of responsibility and evaluation.

If we regard the Day of Judgment as a meticulous “divine accounting” process, these fifty rights can be likened to fifty clear, independent files opened before each of us. In each file, a specific responsibility is raised, and we – by virtue of our free will and knowledge – must explain our position toward it: how we acted, how committed we were, and whether we fell short. This is precisely where the logical link between the *Treatise on Rights* and the matter of the fifty questions of the Day of Judgment becomes evident: every right defined in this treatise inherently carries the potential for questioning and demanding an answer.

Thus, the *Treatise on Rights* offers us a precise roadmap for moving from this world to the Hereafter – a roadmap that not only outlines the scope and limits of our responsibilities but also draws our attention to the reality that the fifty questions of the Day of Judgment are formed around these very known responsibilities. Familiarity with this roadmap means practicing how to answer – a practice that must begin before we stand in that majestic, decisive court.

Of course, readiness for that great encounter cannot be achieved by merely reading or memorizing these rights. What will matter on the Day of Reckoning is the practical realization of these rights in real life. It is this attention and commitment that transforms the *Treatise on Rights* from a mere ethical text into a “practical guide for accountability on the Day of Reckoning.”

Categorization of the *Treatise on Rights*: A Key to Identifying the Areas of Questioning on the Day of Reckoning

In his noble *Treatise on Rights*, Imam Zayn al-Abidin (Peace be upon him) has elaborated a comprehensive and precise set of our responsibilities; these responsibilities encompass all the major spheres of personal and social life and clearly demonstrate that the fifty questions of the Day of Judgment are not confined to a single dimension of our life.

These rights can be organized into five broad categories – devotional, individual, familial, social, and general – a classification that helps us, before facing the questions of the Day of Judgment, to know which area of our life each question targets. In this sense, the *Treatise on Rights* serves as an earthly map for identifying the main areas of questioning on the Day of Reckoning.

The rights presented in this treatise are recognized within these five major categories:

- **Devotional and Divine Rights:** Duties that regulate the servant's relationship with God, including the right of God, the right of the soul, the rights of body parts, and foundational acts of worship such as prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, and charity – the domain in which the foundation of our religiosity and servitude is measured.
- **Individual and Personal Rights:** Responsibilities that clarify our standing with respect to ourselves and toward those who hold rights within the framework of guidance and upbringing – from the relationship with the divine leaders to the rights of parents, children, and brothers in faith.
- **Familial and Kinship Rights:** A set of moral and practical commitments toward one's spouse, relatives, and those with whom we share closer ties – an area where the quality of close relationships becomes the criterion for evaluation.
- **Social Rights:** A broad spectrum of responsibilities toward members of society – from the prayer leader and the muezzin to neighbors, business partners, fellow travelers, debtors and creditors, colleagues, and even non-Muslims living under the protection of Islamic society.
- **General and Situational Rights:** Guidelines and rights concerning specific human situations – from how to interact with the older and the younger to conduct toward the righteous, wrongdoers, the needy, the one who offers advice, and even the enemy.

This categorization makes clear that Imam Sajjad (Peace be upon him) has placed no dimension of our life outside the domain of responsibility and accountability.

Familiarity with this list is, in effect, familiarity with the fifty questions of the Day of Judgment – the arenas that will open each of our life files on the Day of Reckoning and give meaning to our answering.

The Believer's Life Plan in Light of the *Treatise on Rights*

Imam Zayn al-Abidin's (Peace be upon him) *Treatise on Rights* is a comprehensive and cohesive blueprint for ordering our lives. This enduring text, like a precise map, specifies the place of every behavior, choice, and relationship within God's purposeful system and teaches us how to live consciously and accountably.

In this treatise, Imam Sajjad (Peace be upon him) does not limit himself to describing acts of worship or offering moral advice; rather, he brings together the rights of God, the soul and body parts, familial relationships, social interactions, relations between the ruling authority and the people, and even the manner of dealing with friends, companions, opponents, and enemies. The result of this all-embracing outlook is a complete picture of the arenas of human responsibility – a picture showing that a faithful life requires planning in all areas, not only in devotional matters.

From this perspective, the *Treatise on Rights* teaches that we are responsible for everything to which we dedicate our time, ability, and attention, and that the way we manage our personal and family lives shapes what we will be held accountable for on the Day of Judgment. If we regard life as a purposeful journey culminating in the Divine Court, the *Treatise on Rights* is the very guide that illuminates the path of this journey and helps ensure that our behavior today does not conflict with tomorrow's questions.

For this reason, preparing for the fifty questions of the Day of Judgment is not merely a mental or doctrinal concern; it means building a lifestyle in which every right is taken seriously in advance and observed in practice. The *Treatise on Rights* teaches us that no area of human life – whether personal or social, or in terms of answering before God – lies outside the realm of responsibility and questionability.

Anyone who makes this charter the centerpiece of their life plan and moves it from the stage of knowledge into the field of action will be a disciplined, responsible, and reliable person in this world; and in the Hereafter, equipped with a life already shaped on the basis of accountability, such a person will undoubtedly pass more easily through the questioning stations of the Day of Judgment and advance toward harmonizing with the existential structure of the Hereafter.

What emerges from this entire study is that Imam Zayn al-Abidin's *Treatise on Rights* provides a clear framework for our preparation and accountability on the Day of Judgment. The fifty rights enlisted by the Imam cover precisely those domains that narrations introduce as the grounds for questioning and judgment – such that every “right” in this world finds its counterpart as a “question” in the Hereafter. From this standpoint, the relationship between the *Treatise on Rights* and the fifty questions of the Day of Judgment is a structural one. Our lifestyle today is the very file we will face upon our birth into the Afterlife.

References

- [1]. *Sahifa Sajjadiyya*, Supplication 20
- [2]. Shaykh al-Tusi, al-Amali, Session 3, *Hadith* 111.
- [3]. Majlisi, [*Bihar al-Anwar*](#), vol.74, p. 236.