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Spiritual Accounting Based on Muhasaba al-Nafs by Sayyid ibn Tawus

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Abstract

Muhasaba al-nafs, or spiritual accounting, plays a key role in the spiritual journey with the goal of nearness to God. It works as a self- assessment of a person's thoughts and deeds on a daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly basis such as thanking God for every accomplishment and asking forgiveness for all wrongs committed with the intention of not repeating them. Many Islamic scholars throughout history have explored this subject and have either taught, compiled, or were prolific authors in the field.

This article touches upon the work of Sayyid ibn Tawus called *Muhasaba al-Nafs*, offering a biography of the author, an overview of the book, and a summary of each chapter, which includes topics such as the recording of our deeds and its exposure to God, the Prophet, and the Infallibles; the importance of self-accounting, practical steps to self-purification, and the special days, times, and places for prayer and to fulfill one's duties.

Introduction

As an ethical expression, *muhasaba al-nafs* (literally, self-accounting) plays a key role in spiritual and moral discussions. Commonly translated as spiritual accounting or inward accounting, it has been largely considered in scholarly works and Shi'a traditions. In a nutshell, *muhasaba al-nafs* requires one to appropriate a specific time (usually on a daily basis) and contemplate deeply on his deeds in the past (day, weeks, months, or year) and thank Allah for every accomplishment and ask for forgiveness for all the sins committed, along with the intention not to repeat them. In spiritual wayfaring, the process of *muhasaba al- nafs*, if followed properly, will lead to reducing one's sins and his progress in the spiritual

journey.

Due to the great importance of spiritual accounting, many scholars throughout Islamic history either compiled independent books on this subject, such as *Muhasaba al-Nafs* by Ibrahim ibn Ali Al-'Amili Al-Kaf'ami, Shaykh Ibrahim Kashifi, and Sayyid Muhammad Husain Shahrestani) or dedicated a chapter of their books to this subject. In this regard, *Muhasaba al-Nafs* by Sayyid ibn Tawus is a notable work.

About the author

Sayyid Radi al-Din Ali bin Musa ibn Ja'far ibn Tawus, a descendant of Imam Hasan and Imam Sajjad, was born on 15th of Muharram in 589 AH in Hilla. His father, Musa ibn Ja'far, was among the great narrators, and his mother, the daughter of Warram ibn Abi Firas,[1] a renowned Shi'a scholar. Sayyid ibn Tawus passed his early educations before his father and maternal grandfather and soon showed his excellent talent.

Benefited by the scholars of Hilla, he travelled to other cities. Kazimayn was his first destination, where he married and afterwards went to Baghdad in 625 AH and became a well-known and revered scholar by others scholars and the general public. When the Abbasid Caliph pressured him to undertake some official posts in the government, he returned to his hometown Hilla. He also travelled to Mashhad, Najaf, and Karbala and stayed for 3 years in each of them. His last journey was then to Baghdad where he stayed until his death. A great man of letters, a jurist, and a poet, Sayyid ibn Tawus was prominent for his piety and leading position in mysticism. He stayed in Baghdad for 15 years where he continued teaching and writing.

Among his well-known students are Sadid al-Din al-Hilli (Allama Hilli's father), Allamah Hilli, Hasan ibn Dawud Al-Hilli, Abd Al-Karim ibn Ahmad ibn Tawus (his nephew) and Ali ibn 'Isa Al-'Irbili. He had about 50 works, a great deal of which include supplications and *ziyarat* (special prayers when visiting the tombs of the Infallibles and great people). Among them one are the following:

- *Al-Muhimmat wa al-Tatimmat* in 10 vols. each of which has been published with an independent title such as *Falah al-Sa'il, Zuhra al-Rabi', Jamal al-'Usbu'*, and *'Iqbal al-'Amal.*

- *Kashf al-Mahajja li Thamara al-Muhja*: a moral book containing his recommendations to his children;

- *Misbah al-Za'ir wa Janah al-Musafir;*

- *Al-Malhuf 'ala Qatla al-Tufuf:* an authentic and well-known work on the description of the event of Karbala and

- *Muhaj al-Da'awat wa Manhaj al-'Inayat.*

Sayyid ibn Tawus passed away in 664 AH in Baghdad at the age of 75 and was buried in the holy shrine

of Imam Ali in Najaf.

An overview of the book

Muhasaba al-Nafs by Sayyid ibn Tawus comprises of an introduction and five chapters. The first chapter deals with Qur'anic verses regarding the importance of spiritual accounting; the second chapter considers the same subject in narrations; the third is on the days and times suitable for spiritual accounting; the fourth refers to important days and times in the Islamic calendar that a person is required more so to carefully consider his deeds; and the last chapter gives an overall and motivating general and detailed account of the values of spiritual accounting.

The introduction of the book

The bigger part of the introduction revolves around Ibn Tawus' motivation for writing the book – which the atmosphere of the Qur'an and hadith is a spiritual one and instructions are given on self- purification; hence, the topic is a worthwhile to dig deeper. However, the ones who want to know the details of spiritual accounting may not have access to those references. He deemed it upon himself to compile an independent book on this crucial subject.

Chapter 1

In this chapter, Sayyid ibn Tawus refers to three verses of the Qur'an on the fact that all our deeds are recorded by specified angels:

- Chapter 82 Verses 10-12:

وَإِنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ لَحَافِظِينَ كِرَامًا كَاتِبِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ

Indeed, there are over you watchers, noble writers who know whatever you do.

- Chapter 50 Verse 18:

مَا يَلْفِظُ مِنْ قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ عَتِيدٌ

He says no word but that there is a ready observer beside him.

- Chapter 45 Verse 29:

هَٰذَا كِتَابُنَا يَنْطِقُ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْحَقِّ ۚ إِنَّا كُنَّا نَسْتَنْسِخُ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

Indeed, We used to record what you used to do.

Chapter 2

This chapter revolves around the narration of ten traditions from the Infallibles regarding the importance of spiritual accounting and its practical steps:

– The well–known tradition by the Prophet:

Do self–spiritual accounting before the day when you will be accounted and weigh your soul before the day when it will be weighed and make ready for [the day of] the greatest manifestation.2

– Kulayni in his book in the chapter on belief and disbelief quotes Imam al–Kadhim as saying:

The one who does not do spiritual accounting every day in order to thank Allah if he has done good deed or ask Him for forgiveness and repent if he has committed a sin, is not from us [i.e. such person is not a real follower of us, the household of the Holy Prophet].3

– Yahya ibn al–Hasan ibn Harun al–Husayni in his *Al–'Amali* narrates from al–Hasan ibn Ali who quotes the Prophet as saying:

A servant [of Allah] is not considered as a faithful believer unless he brings his soul to account [i.e. spiritual accounting] much harder than a person who brings his partner to account or a master who brings his slave to account. 4

– Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Mahbub narrates from Imam al–Sadiq who quotes his father as saying:

In each and every day, that day tells human beings that 'I am a new day and I will testify against you. Therefore, be beneficent toward me and do good deeds in this day so that I will make your affairs easy on the Day of Judgment as you will never see me again after that.'5

– Mas'ada ibn Ziyad al–Raba'i in his book (which is among the asls of Shi'a) narrates from Imam Sadiq who quotes his father as saying:

When the night envelops, an announcer calls out so loudly that all creations except for the two weighty ones hear: 'O the son of Adam! I am a new creation bearing witness on whatever occurs in me. So take benefit from me since as soon as the sun rises I would not return to the world again and you would not be able to increase a good deed in me or repent for a sin in me'. When night is over and the day begins, the day says the same".6

– Shaykh Mufid in his *Al–'Amali* quotes Imam Ali ibn al–Husayn as saying:

The appointed angel for every servant writes in that servant's book of deeds: 'Do good deeds in its

beginning and ending so whatever occurs between the two will be forgiven for you'.7

Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Saffar in his *Fadl Al-Du'a* narrates from Imam Sadiq who quotes the Prophet as saying:

Good for the one who, on the Day of Judgment, finds in his book of deeds 'I ask Allah for forgiveness' under every sin.8

The other narrations in this chapter are in the same line.

Chapter 3

According to Sayyid ibn Tawus, based on various narrations, all deeds are exposed to Allah, His messenger, and the Infallible Imams on Mondays and Thursdays. In this regard, Chapter 9 Verse 105 reads:

وَقُلِ اعْمَلُوا فَسَيَرَى اللَّهُ عَمَلَكُمْ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ

And say, 'Go on working: Allah will see your conduct, and His Apostle and the faithful* [*as well*]*'.

According to many scholars and exegetes of the Qur'an, *"the faithful"* in the above-mentioned verse refers to the Infallible Imams who together with the Prophet come to know the deeds of all people every Monday and Thursday. Ibn Tawus then cites some narrations that explicitly or implicitly refer to the importance of these two days:

- When Ya'qub ibn Shu'aib says he asked Imam al-Sadiq about the above-mentioned verse, the Imam said that it referred to the Imams. Yazid ibn Mu'awiya al-'Ijli narrates a narration with the same content from Imam al-Sadiq.

- Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri narrates that once Ammar told the Prophet, "I wish that you have such a long life as that of Noah." The Prophet replied, "O Ammar! My life is better for you and my demise is not bad for you. As for my life, you commit some sins and I ask Allah to forgive you, but after my life, be Godwary and send peace and salutation to me and my household, since you will be shown to me by your names, your fathers' names, and your tribes' names. If your deeds are good, I praise Allah; and if they are bad, I ask Allah to forgive your sins."

- Muhammad ibn 'Imran al-Marzbani in the seventh part of his *Kitab al-Azmina* narrates that the Prophet fasted on Mondays and Thursdays. When he was asked the reason, he replied, "All the deeds are raised up every Monday and Thursday. I like to be fasting while my deeds are raised up."9

Sayyid ibn Tawus then indicates that based on these narrations, it behooves everyone to take heed on

Mondays and Thursdays by performing the duties and avoiding acts of disobedience, since both narrative and rational arguments demonstrate that at the time when the acts of a slave are exposed to his master, he should be more careful than other times.

Ibn Tawus then suggests a supplication to be read in the beginning hours of these two days. Although this prayer has not been narrated from the Infallibles, its content is worthy enough to be mentioned here:

اللهم إن هذا يوم وجدنا الأخبار النبوية والآثار الأحمدية تضمنت أن الأعمال تعرض فيه عليك وعلى من يقرأ عليك ونحن نسألك ونتوسل اليك بكل وسيلة لها قبول لديك أن توفقنا فيه لما تريد منا ولما ترضى عنا وتجعل حركاتنا وسكناتنا صادرة عن الهامك لنا ما فيه زيادة السعادات بالعبادات وتصوننا عن موافق الغرامات والخيانات وأن تتقدم من الملكين الحافظين أن لا يكتبا علينا الا ما يقربنا اليك ويزيدنا اقبالا منك علينا واقبالا منا عليك وأن تتجاوز عما يقتضي معاتبة منا أو مجانبة أو مغاينة أو اخجالا أو نقصانا أو امتحانا أو تهينا ما بيننا وبينك وتعفو عما قصرنا فيه من الاستدراك ولا تفضحنا بين الروحانيين من الملائكة وأرواح المؤمنين وعند سيدنا خاتم النبيين والمرسلين وان تدخلنا في حماه وحما عترته الطاهرين وحما الرحمة التي تفضلت بها علينا بالانساء والبقاء على العلم بما يصدر عن سوء الآراء وغلط الأهواء ولا تخجل رسولك محمدا العزيز عليك وعترته المعظمين لديك ان عترتهم ورغيتهم لا تضيق عليهم سعة رحمتك وان تستر على مخالفتك وعدم طاعتك برحمتك يا أرحم الراحمين

The translation of this prayer is as follows:

O Allah! Today is the day when, based on Prophetic narrations, our deeds are exposed to You and those who will relate them to you [apparently, the angels]. Therefore, we ask you… to grant us the succour to act upon whatever You want from us in this day and whatever that would satisfy You… so that the two appointed angels should not write in our books of deeds anything but that which makes us closer to You… We ask You not to dishonour us among the spiritual entities such as the angels and the souls of pious believers and more specifically before our master, the seal of Prophets and Messengers… and do not make your beloved Prophet, Muhammad and his household ashamed before you [as a result of our hideous actions] …"

In the last part of this chapter, Sayyid ibn Tawus narrates some traditions regarding Thursdays:

– The merit of reciting salawat in the afternoon on Thursdays. Imam Sadiq said:

On Thursdays, in the afternoon, Allah sends some of the angels from heaven to the earth with whom are silver tablets and golden pens by which they write the salawat on Muhammad at the time of sunset.[10]

– There have been narrated some prayers to be recited at the end of every Thursday such as:

أستغفر الله الذي لا اله الا هو الحي القيوم وأتوب اليه توبة عبد خاشع خاضع مسكين مستجير لا يستطيع لنفسه صرفا ولا عدلا ولا نفعا ولا ضرا ولا حياة ولا موتا ولا نشورا وصلى الله على محمد وعترته الطيبين الطاهرين الأبرار وسلم تسليماً كثيراً.

– On the last Thursday of every month, all deeds of the month are ascended to heaven and exposed to Allah, the Prophet, and his household. Regarding this, 'Abd al-Samad ibn 'Abd Al-Malik narrates from Imam Sadiq who has said, "On the last Thursday of every month, the deeds of that month are raised up."[11]

Chapter 4

Using verses of the Qur'an and hadith, Ibn Tawus shares the special times and places to take heed concerning fulfilling his duties and avoiding sins. He refers to:

1. The month of Ramadan.

2. The four sacred months (al-Ashhur al-Hurum: Dhi al-Qa'da, Dhil Hijja, Muharram, and Rajab in lunar calendar).

3. The Known Days (Ayyam Ma'lumat) – based on verse 28 of the chapter al-Hajj]. Qur'anic commentators have differing views regarding the meaning of this term. According to some, Ayyam Ma'lumat refers to the first 10 days of Dhil-Hijja while others hold that the known days are its 11th, 12th and 13th days (commonly known as Ayyam al-Tashriq), and still some other believe that the 10th day of Dhil-Hijja should be added to these 3 days.

4. The Appointed Days (Ayyam Ma'dudat), based on verse 203 of the chapter al-Baqara] which has been interpreted as the 11th, 12th and 13th days of Dhil-Hijja or them plus the 10th day of Dhil-Hijja).

And among the specific places, Sayyid ibn Tawus mentioned the following:

1. The Holy Mosque (Al-Masjid al-Haram),

2. The Holy Kaa'ba,

3. The mosque of the Prophet [in Medina],

4. Jerusalem (Bayt al-Maqdis);

5. Other honoured sanctuaries, shrines, and holy mosques; and every area the Qur'an and narrations deem venerable.

Chapter 5

This longer chapter entitled *The Virtues and Merits of Spiritual Accounting* includes practical details on self-accounting. The author validates each point by referring to the following narrations.

Spiritual accounting at the end of the day

Imam al-Sadiq said:

"At sunset, remember Allah, the Almighty, and if you are among people who distract you then leave them and be engaged in prayer."12

Sayyid ibn Tawus then suggests the following prayer, written in his own words:

> سلام الله جل جلاله و سلام خاصته و سلامي عليكما أيها الملكان الحافظان أستودعكما الله جل جلاله و أقرأ عليكما السلام و أتوجه إليكما بالله المنعم عليكما أن تشرفاني بجواب التسليم و تساعداني على سلوك السبيل المستقيم و تشفعا إلى مولاكما الحليم الرحيم الكريم جل جلاله أن يعفو عني و يرحمني و يرضى عني و لا يشمت بي عدوه و عدوي الشيطان الرجيم فها أنا قد سلمت نفسي إليه و استسلمت من يده بين يديه و أتوجه إليه بكل من يعز عليه و بجميع الوسائل إليه في الأمر لكما بمحو السيئات و تبديلها بما هو جل جلاله أهل من المراحم و الحسنات و ها أنا أقول ما قال المقبلون من النادمين ربنا ظلمنا أنفسنا فإن لم تغفر لنا و ترحمنا لنكونن من الخاسرين ربنا لا تؤاخذنا إن نسينا أو أخطأنا ربنا و لا تحمل علينا إصرا كما حملته على الذين من قبلنا ربنا و لا تحملنا ما لا طاقة لنا به و اعف عنا و اغفر لنا و ارحمنا أنت مولانا يا أرحم الراحمين ثلاث مرات ثم يقول يا إلهي قد مدحت المستغفرين بالأسحار و بلغنا أنك تغفر الذنوب بالاستغفار و أنا أستغفرك و أسألك التوبة و يكرر ذلك مائة مرة

What follows is the translation of some parts:

O two appointed [upon me] angels! May the peace of Allah and His special servants and that of mine be upon you... I ask you by Allah to ask for forgiveness for the sins that I have committed with regards to right of Allah and right of humans... [O Allah!] I am Your servant whom You have created from soil and clay and base fluid and I have recited in Your Holy Book [i.e. Qur'an] that ***'Indeed, there are over you watchers, noble writers who know whatever you do'***13 and Your Messenger and his household have reminded us that 'whoever does not do spiritual accounting is not from us'. Now I am in Your presence while I have no deed to be content with since the most trivial of my hideous acts makes me ashamed and the least of my corrupted deeds dishonour me... I repent for all the sins I have accumulated... and I ask You for forgiveness since it happens that a master forgives his slave with whom he is not satisfied... You have ordered us to pardon others and You have praised those who suppress their anger, and excuse [the faults of] the people14 and have promised to reward those who forgive others and ... it behooves You more than others to do so. Thus, pardon me (and he repeats this 100 times).

The author reminds the readers that reciting such supplications is the least that one may do for spiritual accounting. Thus, no one has any excuse for neglecting it.

Narrated supplications for spiritual accounting

According to Imam al-Baqir, the Prophet, while in tears, read the following prayer during sunset:

اللهم أمسي ظلمي مستجيرا بعفوك وأمست ذنوبي مستجيرة بمغفرتك وأمسى خوفي مستجيراً بأمنك وأمسى ذلّي مستجيراً بعزّك وأمسى فقري مستجيراً بغناك وأمسى وجهي البالي الفاني مستجيراً بوجهك الدائم الباقي ألبسني عافيتك وغشّني برحمتك وجلّلني كرامتك وقني شرّ خلقك من الجن والانس يا الله يا رحمن يا رحيم

O Allah! this day has come to an end while I seek refuge to Your pardon for my wrongdoing and to Your forgiveness for my sins and to Your safety for my fear and to Your grandeur for my degradation and to Your richness for my poverty and to Your strength for my weakness and to Your everlasting face for my mortal face. Clothe me with Your pardon and engulf me into Your mercy and honour me by Your generosity and protect me from the evil of the jinn and humans O Allah! O Beneficent! O Merciful!

In his *Al-Kafi,* Shaykh Kulayni narrates that at nightfall, Imam Ali used to say: "Welcome to the new night and the witnessing writer. Write (you two) in the Name of Allah."15

Then the Imam would continue his dhikr, or remembrance of Allah. Imam al-Sadiq said:

من قال عند غروب الشمس في كل يوم يا من ختم النبوة بمحمد صلي الله عليه وآله وسلم اختم لي في يومي هذا بخير وشهري بخير وسنتي بخير وعمري بخير فمات في تلك الليلة او في تلك الجمعة او في ذلك الشهر او في تلك السنة دخل الجنة.

Whosoever recites the following supplication every day at sunset: 'O the One who sealed the Prophethood by Muhammad! End this day of mine with goodness; and this month of mine with goodness; and this year of mine with goodness; and my lifetime with goodness' then if it so happens that he dies during that day or week or month or year, he would enter Paradise.

Spiritual accounting during the last hours of the night

According to *Muhasaba al-Nafs,* it is recommended prostrate after waking up to thank Allah for all the blessings He has granted him – just as the Prophet did – and to sit in front of God, the Master who created and nurtured him. The same is to be done for one hour at night – to contemplate about our deeds, and ask the two appointed angels (for the night-time) to ask forgiveness for him just as he had asked the two appointed angels (for daytime) to do so. It is worth mentioning that Ibn Tawus assumes that the "night" angels at differ from the "daytime" and endeavour to purify the book of deeds from sins and mistakes.

Ibn Tawus then addresses those who are not able to stand or sit for prayer, as well as those whose low degree of knowledge regarding their happiness in both this world and the next has become an obstacle for standing for worship in the last hours of the night, mentions a special supplication to recite while lying down:

يا راحم الضعيف الهالك يا واهب الممالك قد سمعت من حكمك الشامل لأهل الأبصار الذين يذكرون الله قياما و قعودا و على جنوبهم و يتفكرون في خلق السماوات و الأرض ربنا ما خلقت هذا باطلا سبحانك فقنا عذاب النار و ها أنا أسألك على جنبي أن تعفو ذنبي و أن تجعلني ممن أغنيته بعلمك عن المقال و بكرمك عن السؤال

O The One who has mercy upon the weak and perishable and grants great deals of gifts! I have heard Your Decree about those who have insight; '***Those who remember Allah standing, sitting, and lying on their sides, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth*** [***and say***] ***'Our Lord, You have not created this in vain! Immaculate are You! Save us from the punishment of the Fire"***.16Thus, I ask you, while I am still in my bed, to forgive my sins and take me with those whom You, through Your knowledge, exempt from discourse and through Your generosity, exempt from asking."

Narrations regarding the phrase O Most Merciful of the merciful

Narrations regarding the phrase "يا ارحم الراحمين" – O Most Merciful of the merciful:

Imam Sadiq said:

كان أبي اذا ألحت به الحاجة سجد من غير صلاة ولا ركوع ثم يقول :يا أرحم الراحمين(سبع مرات) ثم يسأل حاجته ثم قال: ما قالها أحد سبعا إلا قال الله تعالى: ها أنا أرحم الراحمين سل حاجتك

Whenever my father had an essential request and petition, he prostrated himself (without initiating a prayer or bowing down), and repeated 'O Most Merciful of the merciful ones' seven times, and then asked Allah for his request." Imam al- Sadiq then continued: "No one repeats this seven times except that Allah, the Almighty, replies: 'Here I am; the Most Merciful of the merciful. Ask Me your request.'"

Imam al-Sadiq said:

إن لله ملكا يقال له : إسماعيل ، ساكن في السماء الدنيا إذا قال العبد : يا أرحم الراحمين سبع مرات ، قال إسماعيل ، قد سمع الله أرحم الراحمين ، سل حاجتك.

The Allah Almighty has an angel named Ishmael who resides in the lowest heaven. Whenever a servant calls: 'O Most Merciful of the merciful', and repeats it seven times, Ishmael tells him: 'Allah, Most Merciful of the merciful, heard you. You may ask your request."'17

Imam al-Sajjad said:

سمع النبي ص رجلا يقول يا أرحم الراحمين فأخذ بمنكب الرجل فقال هذا أرحم الراحمين قد استقبلك بوجهه سل حاجتك .

The Prophet heard someone calling out: 'O Most Merciful of the merciful,' the Prophet took his shoulder and told him: 'The Most Merciful of the merciful has turned His face to you. So ask Him your request.' 18

Sayyid ibn Tawus then mentions three narrations that informs us of the Prophet's habit of prostration when he woke up.

Repetition of other phrases in supplications

The last part of the book is about the virtue of calling the Names and Attributes of Allah and its effect in fulfilling one's needs and requests. Ibn Tawus mentions three expressions, along with its the relevant narrations:

1. Repeating the following ten times: "يا " (O Allah!), recommended in the following narration:

> اشتكي بعض أصحاب أبي جعفر ع فقال له قل يا الله يا الله عشر مرات متتابعات فانه لم يقلها مؤمن الا قال ربه لبيك عبدي سل حاجتكز

One of the companions of Imam al-Baqir complained to him regarding a specific problem, whereupon the Imam said: 'Say 'O Allah' ten times; no believer does so except that his Lord responds: 'Here I am, O My servant! Ask me your request'. 19

2. Repeating the following ten times: "يا رب" (O my Lord!).

Imam al-Sadiq said:

> من قال عشر مرات يا رب يا رب قال له ربه لبيك سل حاجتك.

"Whoever says 'O my Lord!' ten times, his Lord responds: 'Here I am. Ask your request.'"20

3. Repeating the following three times: "أي رب"(O my Lord!).

Imam al-Sadiq said:

> ان العبد اذا قال أي رب ثلاثا صيح من فوقه لبيك سل تعطه.

When a servant says 'O my Lord' three times, it will be called out from his above: 'Here I am. Ask [your request] and you will be given [what you have asked for].'21

Sayyid ibn Tawus ends his invaluable book with the 17th and 18th verses of the chapter al-Zumar:

فَبَشِّرْ عِبَادِ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقَوْلَ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ أَحْسَنَهُ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَاهُمُ اللَّهُ ۖ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمْ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

So, give good news to My servants who listen to the word [of Allah] and follow the best [sense] of it. They are the ones whom Allah has guided, and it is they who possess intellect.

Undoubtedly, spiritual accounting is considered as an essential part of spiritual wayfaring. The guidelines, recommendations, and supplications mentioned by Sayyid ibn Tawus in his *Muhasaba al-Nafs* are of great value and importance for every wayfarer who aims at spiritual progress as outlined by the Prophet and Infallible Imams.

1. d. 605 AH
2. Shaykh Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. 16 p. 99 (with a slight difference).
حاسبوا أنفسكم قبل أن تحاسبوا وزنوا قبل أن توزنوا وتجهزوا للعرض الأكبر
3. Kulayni, Al-Kafi, vol. 2 p. 453; Shaykh Hurr Al-'Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi'a, vol. 16 p. 95 (with a slight difference in both sources).
ليس منا من لم يحاسب نفسه في كل يوم فان عمل حسنا ازداد الله شكرا وان عمل سيئا استغفر الله وتاب اليه
4. Shaykh Hurr Al-'Amili, Ibid., p. 99.
لا يكون العبد مؤمنا حتى يحاسب نفسه أشد من محاسبة الشريك شريكه والسيد عبده
5. Shaykh Hurr Al-'Amili, Ibid., p. 99.
ما من يوم يمرّ على ابن آدم إلا قال له ذلك اليوم: يا بن آدم!.. أنا يومٌ جديد ، وأنا عليك شهيدٌ ، فقل فيَّ خيراً واعمل فيّ خيراً ، أشهد لك به يوم القيامة ، فإنّك لن تراني بعده أبداً
6. Shaykh Hurr Al-'Amili, Ibid.; Kulayni, Ibid., p. 523 (with some slight differences in both sources).
إن الليل اذا أقبل نادى مناد بصوت يسمعه الخلائق إلا الثقلين يابن آدم إني خلق جديد إني على ما فيّ شهيد فخذ مني فإني لو قد طلعت الشمس لم أرجع إلى الدنيا ثم لم تزدد فيّ حسنة ولم تستعتب فيّ من سيئة وكذلك يقول النهار اذا أدبر الليل
7. Shaykh Hurr Al-'Amili, Ibid. (with some slight differences).
ان الملك الموكل بالعبد يكتب في صحيفة اعماله فاملئوا اولها وآخرها خيرا يغفر لكم ما بين ذلك
8. Shaykh Hurr Al-'Amili, Ibid. p. 69.
طوبى لمَن وجد في صحيفة عمله يوم القيامة تحت كلّ ذنبٍ أستغفر الله
9. The text is as follows:
ان الأعمال ترفع في كل اثنين وخميس وأحب أن يرفع عملي وأنا صائم
10. The Arabic text is as follows:
إذا كان يوم الخميس عند العصر ، أهبط الله عزّ وجلّ ملائكةً من السماء إلى الأرض ، معها صحائفٌ من فضة ، بأيديهم أقلامٌ من ذهب ، تكتب الصلاة على محمد وآله إلى غروب الشمس
11.
آخر كل خميس في الشهر ترفع فيه أعمال الشهر
12. Kulayni, Al-Kafi, vol. 2 p. 524; Shaykh Hurr A-'Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi'a, vol. 7 p. 71.
اذا تغيرت الشمس فأذكر الله عز وجل وان كنت مع قوم يشغلونك فقم وادعز
13. Chapter al-'Infitar, Verses 10-12.
وَإِنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ لَحَافِظِينَ
كِرَامًا كَاتِبِينَ
يَعْلَمُونَ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ
14. See Chapter 3 Verse 134.
15. Kulayni, Al-Kafi, vol. 2 p. 523; Shaykh Hurr Ak-'Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi'a, vol. 7 p. 71.
مرحبا بالليل الجديد والكاتب الشهيد اكتبا على اسم الله ثم يذكر الله عز وجل
16. Chapter 3 Verse 191.
الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَٰذَا بَاطِلًا سُبْحَانَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ
17. Shaykh Hurr Al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. 7 p. 88.

18. Ibid.
19. Ibid., p.89.
20. Ibid.
21. See Ibid.

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