

EVEN MINUS DI FOUR EYE SEFF!!

It will be THANKSGIVING DAY here in the U.S. in less than 24 hours and, like many around the country, I too plan on spending a reasonable amount of time at the stove, cooking. In our home, as I am sure is the case in many others as well, we faithfully adhere to the TRADITION of saying what we are each THANKFUL for before we eat, and THIS YEAR, just de list of "THINGS I AM SO THANKFUL TO DE ALMIGHTY OBASE FOR" long sotey e start na for da Petrol Station for HALF MILE JUNCTION for Victoria dey, (Corner DONANGU and da Louis Shalo e Travel Agency), go reach sotey for ROND POINT Deido (for place wey dem dey sell "Boulangerie Bread"! That is why I will refrain, this time around, from warding off or "assaulting" all the annoying household members who keep showing up to "TISS" (taste) whatever I am "suffering" to fry, bake, boil or roast with my converted-to-a-WEAPON OF INDIVIDUAL DESTRUCTION, FUFU STICK. It will be better for them that they show up at the Dinner table with a reasonable amount of food already in their bellies, as wey, by de time ah don TALK wetin ah get for talk, then SING & DANCE, e go stay small!

I consider this "ritual" of GIVING THANKS a Good one, as it does fall right in line with the ORIGINAL reason why the Holiday was instituted in the first place!

Here, verbatim, is the Original Proclamation made by Governor William Bradford of Massachusetts, three years after the Pilgrims settled at Plymouth in 1623:

"Inasmuch as the great Father has given us this year an abundant harvest of Indian corn, wheat, peas, beans, squashes, and garden vegetables, and has made the forests to abound with game and the sea with fish and clams, and inasmuch as He has protected us from the ravages of the savages, has spared us from pestilence and disease, has granted us freedom to worship God according to the dictates of our own conscience. Now I, your magistrate, do proclaim that all ye Pilgrims, with your wives and ye little ones, do gather at the meeting house, on ye hill, between the hours of 9 and 12 in the day time, on Thursday, November 29th, of the year of our

Lord one thousand six hundred and twenty three and the third year since ye Pilgrims landed on ye Pilgrim Rock, there to listen to ye pastor and render thanksgiving to ye Almighty God for all His blessings."

Now while I would hardly expect anyone to be Thanking God for Indian Corn and Beans tomorrow, I am sure many of us are going to mention the "USUAL", "COMMON" things: FAMILY, FRIENDS, FOOD, SHELTER, etc., and again, I think that is GREAT.

However, here's what I am more interested in finding out:

DO YOU GIVE THANKS FOR THE UNUSUAL, EXTRAORDINARY, BIG THINGS GOD HAS WROUGHT IN YOUR LIFE?

I would not be surprised at all if your answer is "YES" but, What if I added one "little" word to the Question, rephrasing it to read:

DO YOU GIVE THANKS FOR THE BIG THINGS GOD HAS WROUGHT IN YOUR LIFE, PUBLICLY?

I am willing to bet that not as many honest "YES" answers were uttered to this second question, and here are just 5 reasons why not, based on my experience:

1. MAKE DEM NO CAM WITCH MAN, AH BEG: Of all the reasons, this is the one that saddens me the most, because it speaks very directly to a despicable, disgusting, regressive tendency that is a veritable cankerworm that eats at the very fabric of our African/Cameroonian Communities both at home and abroad. Somebody achieves something remarkable which is NEWS and PRAISE worthy, but they are SCARED TO DEATH to let it be known, because of the envy or jealousy that it is likely to incite in some quarters, which has the potential of resulting in a "mash poison" situation on the next trip to deh kontri! Weh-Keh! Consequently, we are more prone to sharing "mbahluck" news of Job Loss, Divorce, Cancer, Home Foreclosures and Car Repossessions, which would attract PITY, rather than envy! MANYAKA!

(*I think this would be just the right time for me to explain why I chose to feature the song "SON ME", ("Protect Me"), which is sung in BASSA and FRENCH by "X-MALEYA", a group of Cameroonian Musicians who, in my reasonably well-versed opinion, are head and shoulders above their peers when it comes to voice and melody quality, as the background music for this particular message. In the song, they talk about the sad and regrettable state of affairs I mention above, asking God, (NYAME), for protection from the HATRED and JEALOUSY directed towards them, on account of their God-Endowed gifts and talents.

"Ngondas" Stella Nunga, Patience Abanda Melone, Sisters Franka Hongla Biaka and Lilian Sool, etc.: Please speak up if I'm mistaken oh! LOL!

Well, with a scenario like this, what happens to GOD'S REPUTATION? (You knew He has one right?) Well, He comes across, and understandably so, as someone who is not just impotent, but wicked! Think about it this way: If your child selectively tells his teacher only stories about how you whip his derrière with a Mulongo, scold him, make him wash pan, pick-a-pin, etc. and NEVER mentions the toys he gets for Christmas or on his birthday or just because, the bedtime stories he is tucked into bed with, his full and over-flowing plate at every meal, his electronic games, etc., WHAT IMPRESSION DO YOU THINK YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER WOULD HAVE OF YOU???

2. WETIN YOU WAN SHOW?: Many consider "Declaring Publicly" what God has done in their lives as boasting and an insensitive "SLAP IN THE FACE" to those who have not been similarly blessed, as in, you dey waka glad sey yah pikin don pass GCE wit 10 papers say make de Mammy dem wey their pikin dem fail for de 10th time, make dem do how??

3. MAKE AH THANK GOD FOR GOD E GOOD WETIN?: There are some who consider their Successes and Achievements a direct result of their PERSONAL, "SELF-MADE (WO)MAN" efforts, as in, "What's God Got To Do With It"? So they go: "Struggle wey ah don struggle, since dem born me orphan for CDC Camp, onley dis me one so!; ah start sell chwing stick for market from small, sotey ah cam open off license, then ah cam buy house, then ... No man no helep me!

There are also those who are simply raving ANGRY at God, having experienced great hardship and undergone great suffering and loss, only for it to be compounded by some "Prosperity Gospel" preacher who tells them that their "situation" is a direct result of their insufficient faith, their inability to tap into God's non-stop, abundant flow of perfect health and limitless wealth, and the sin in their lives!! PUH-LEASE! And they actually tell you that with a straight face, like you have never read the BIBLE itself in which every single one of God's Prophets and Servants, From JOSEPH in the Ngatta, DANIEL in Captivity in Babylon, Stoned-to-death STEPHEN, the martyred APOSTLES, all the way to homeless Jesus Himself, experienced untold suffering!

Here are some Basic Truths we either don't know, or often forget, ignore or neglect:

Whatever we have, we have because God, in his grace and generosity, has given it to us, for there are MANY who are more "deserving" than we are, who are not so Blessed! When we realize this, a joyful gratitude for what we do have is kindled in our hearts, and we are freed from resentment and anxiety over what we don't have. Also, we have the ASSURANCE of a worry, disease, sorrow, pain and death-free life after this present life, and while this flawed life endures, the guarantee that we will never be forsaken or abandoned in the midst of our storms and trials – not a PERMANENT SHIELD from them.

4. HE KNOWS MY HEART; WHY PUT ON A “SHOW”?: Funny enough, many who “plead” this reason, do NOT use the same “logic” when it comes to PRAYING TO GOD TO ASK FOR BLESSINGS OR FAVORS! Yep! When it’s time to ask for HEALING, for a CHILD, or SUCCESS IN BUSINESS or ACADEMIC SUCCESS, we go to our Sunday School Classes, Prayer Groups and “come forward” to be prayed for during the Church Service, but THANKING HIM PUBLICLY FOR ANSWERED PRAYER don come turn ngando!

Just in case you are wondering about this whole “PUBLIC” thing, let me give you a few examples from the Bible that make it clear that God expects us to make His Bounty towards us KNOWN:

- **BUILDING ALTARS TO OFFER SACRIFICES OF PRAISE & THANKSGIVING:** Trust me! Abel, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Noah, Job and all the countless others who offered burnt offerings to God, did not do so from under their beds, choking on the smoke oh! They did it publicly in acknowledgement of God’s goodness to them!

- **DAVID DANCING IN PUBLIC:** David did not just offer burnt offerings of Thanksgiving when the ARK OF The Covenant was brought back to Jerusalem oh! De man – A WHOLE KING, dance MBAYA for middle road wit plenti glad for inside e heart oh! To the point that his wife Michal, (Saul’s daughter), rebuked him for the “display”, which “halla” incurred God’s wrath upon her, in the form of BARRENNESS!!!

- **THE 10th LEPER:** The 10th Leper, as in, the only one who returned to thank Jesus, did not come to Him “CLANDO” by night like Sango Niccodemus did oh! Here’s what the Gospel of Luke says:

15 Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; 16 and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks.

And if you need a “BECAUSE GOD HIMSELF SAYS SO” reason to “comply”, here are just 3 DIRECT BIBLICAL REFERENCES TO PUBLIC WORSHIP, PRAISE & THANKSGIVING:

1 Chronicles 16:29

Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering and come before him! Worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness;

Psalm 95:6

Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!

Psalm 148:1-14

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights! Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his hosts! Praise him, sun and moon, praise him, all you shining stars!

Acts 16:25-26

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them ...

5. "IGNORANCE": This, right here, is one of the BIG reasons why we fail to GIVE THANKS: We are simply oblivious of how hard at work God really is, to PROTECT US FROM DANGERS OF WHICH WE ARE TOTALLY UNAWARE!!! Remember this story from the 6th Chapter of 2 KINGS?

The King of Syria, very Upset with the Prophet ELISHA for supernaturally deciphering and revealing his war strategies to the King of Israel, decided to go after Elisha, The Man of God, who, he was told, was in Dothan at the time. Here's the story, from Verse 14:

"... So he sent there horses and chariots and a great army, and they came by night and surrounded the city.

15 When the servant of the man of God rose early in the morning and went out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was all around the city. And the servant said, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" 16 He {Elisha} said, "Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." 17 Then Elisha prayed and said, "O LORD, please open his eyes that he may see." So the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha."

Talk about A HEDGE OF PROTECTION!!!

There is NOT A SHRED OF DOUBT IN MY MIND that this SUPERNATURAL PROTECTION is what obtained and prevailed in the very recent incident regarding my twin nephew and niece which I shared a couple of days ago, wherein a car that my nephew was in, rolled down a slope with him in it, and stopped just shy of a deep ravine, on the same day that his Aunts (Didi Ndando & I) were actively involved in a UNIQUE THANKSGIVING SERVICE to CELEBRATE the ADDITION to our family, of a “new” Brother. I would not be surprised if I learn, in the sweet by and by, that De Ovah Sabi Devil did try that his “Job Chapter 1 Thing” where he went before GOD and petitioned for permission to turn our family’s REJOICING into SORROW, which would have resulted in a VERY SIGNIFICANT Blow, given that the incident occurred on the eve of our Late Brother’s Birthday, who passed away HOW? In a roll-off-the road car accident as well!! At what age???? 21 AS WELL OH!!

AND THAT IS WHY I SAY: MINUS DE 4 EYE SEFF, I JUST KNOW GOD VIA HIS ANGELS STOPPED THAT CAR – AND, BY EXTENSION, SATAN’S EVIL SCHEME and for that, AS WELL AS THE MANY, MANY, MANY OTHER INSTANCES I AM NOT EVEN AWARE OF, I am using the most PUBLIC avenue available to me to say, THANK YOU LORD!!!