

One day out of the year people give thanks to their creator,  
one day out of the year people honor their mothers, their fathers  
etc... in Islam every day is a day of thanks, every day is mother's  
day, every day is father's  
day....

Yesterday was Thanksgiving, a day that many unfortunately believe was a day that the Indians and pilgrims celebrated together as a showing of gratefulness and peace between two different cultures and ways of life, but in reality Thanksgiving is a day of mourning, a day of sadness, a day that the indigenous people of North America mourn for the death of their grandfathers and forefathers by the hands of the European colonists, Thanksgiving was a day that the European colonists would feast and celebrate out of thanks to their god for allowing them to kill and conquer the Indians and the Indian villages, after conquering a village by slaughtering the men, women, children and buffalo, they would have a feast which they called thanksgiving...

But today is a different day... Today is Friday, ~~the best day of the week for the Muslim. However, though it may be the best day for the Muslim for others it is~~ "Black Friday", the biggest shopping day of the year.

Every year, thousands flock to retail stores to get their hands on a fantastic deal. The lines between need and want blur away as the shopping lists are checked off, check-out lines grow longer and longer, people get angrier, and retail staff try to stay out of the fray. People trampling over each other to get to the shelf with elmo dolls, playstations, or the newest toasters before

anyone else. Walmart, Target and Sams Club all of a sudden turn into NFL football fields with people tackling each other, fighting and creating stampedes over some merchandise that they don't really need.

Look at what the society has done to itself in the name of consumerism. A day of so called thanks has become the prelude to Black Friday. This is the day that many people<sup>1</sup> wants turn into things that they<sup>think they</sup> need. Many think that acquiring these material things will bring ~~us~~<sup>them</sup> happiness, that more is better, that having the latest iphone or latest edition or design will satisfy our souls, but don't fall prey brothers and sisters to the ~~western~~ consumerist lifestyle. Don't think that possessing material objects will bring you happiness and contentment, they may make you feel happy for a couple of days, but eventually that happiness and contentment will fade away, like an illusion. This is the reality of this world and everything contained in it brothers and sisters, listen to what Allah says in the Quran:

اعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهُوَ زِينَةٌ وَتَفَاخُرٌ بَيْنَكُمْ وَتَكَاثُرٌ فِي الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَوْلَادِ  
كَمَثَلِ غَيْثٍ أَعْجَبَ الْكُفَّارَ نَبَاتُهُ ثُمَّ يَهِيجُ فَتَرَاهُ مُصْفَرًّا ثُمَّ يَكُونُ حُطَامًا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ  
عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٌ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْعُرُورِ - 57:20

Know that the life of this world is but amusement and diversion and adornment and boasting to one another and competition in increase of wealth and children - like the example of a rain whose [resulting] plant growth pleases the tillers; then it dries

and you see it turned yellow; then it becomes [scattered] debris. And in the Hereafter is severe punishment and forgiveness from Allah and approval. And what is the worldly life except the enjoyment of delusion.

This world and everything it contains is a deceiving enjoyment...the trees, corn fields and grass that were once green and full of life are now dried up, crumbled, bare. The iphone 6 or 7 is now old, outdated and useless because the iphone x came out. The 2015 Mercedes is now old, because the 2018 edition has emerged...Don't get caught up in the delusion of consumerism today, or any other day...buy the things you need, not the things that advertisements have deceptively influenced you to ~~want~~ think you need, we're not infants anymore, trying to grab any pretty or colorful thing flashed in front of our faces or put in our mouths. The constant advertisements, commercials, billboards, movies and tv programs are illusions. See things as they really are brothers and sisters, don't be from those who waste the wealth that Allah has blessed <sup>us</sup> ~~them~~ with, *those who waste their money are companions of the Shaytan --*

وَأْتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ وَالْمِسْكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَلَا تُبَذِّرْ تَبْذِيرًا –

إِنَّ الْمُبَذِّرِينَ كَانُوا إِخْوَانَ الشَّيَاطِينِ وَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ لِرَبِّهِ كَفُورًا –

“and give your relatives their due rights, as well as the poor person and the traveller, and do not spend your wealth

wastefully. Indeed the wasteful are the brothers of Shaytaan, and Shaytaan is so ungrateful to his lord.”

How many of us have garages, attics and storage rooms devoted to all the junk that we have bought but don't use. The door is always locked and never opened except to put in some new piece of merchandise that we acquired, isn't this a sickness, isn't this someone who would be considered delusional?

Things are not always as they seem brothers and sisters... Consumerism is a spiritual desert, empty, no life, no vegetation, and the happiness that we think will come from buying this or that is only a mirage. Buying the latest flat screen tv or smart phone will not make us happy. Owning a mansion in the suburbs will not bring us inner peace. Having a pile of money in the bank will not bring us closer to Allah, or save our souls, or extend our lives one moment beyond what has been written, regardless of our insurance plans. In fact all of those things are balls and chains that bind our souls and create stress and worry.

Brothers and sisters...the faith in our hearts is more important than the brand name of the clothes we wear. Where our cars, our bikes or our feet take us is more important than the cost of our cars, bikes or sneakers or shoes.

So How can we cure our hearts and souls from the attachment of material things and see through the illusion of materialism and consumerism?

The greatest thing in our possession that we can use to aid our hearts and souls is showing gratitude. And By looking at what we've been blessed with, our hearts and souls become content. Contentment is natural wealth, while luxury is artificial poverty. The prophet Muhammad said:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ " لَيْسَ الْغِنَى عَنْ كَثْرَةِ الْعَرَضِ وَلَكِنَّ الْغِنَى  
غِنَى النَّفْسِ "

Abu Huraira reported that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had said: True Richness does not lie in the abundance of (worldly) goods but true richness is the richness of the soul (heart, self).

True wealth and true richness is the heart being content with what one owns and possesses. Contentment doesn't mean complacency or passivity; it refers to a state of awareness of our blessings, and gratitude for the smallest to the greatest provisions-the tiniest cells in our bodies-~~the~~ the vastness of the heavens and the enormous earth and everything they contain.

Let's become aware of what we have: the food on our plates, our ability to see and hear, the love and health of our families, sanity, intelligence, knowledge, safety, security, a roof over our heads...these things are huge. When we open our eyes and

start to truly see things, then and only then will we become content and happy, and see how meaningless Black Friday is, and how meaningless big screen tvs are, the latest smartphones are, and the newest dress is.

So how can we be grateful and thankful for what we have...the prophet Muhammad told us:

وَعَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ - قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - ﷺ - { انظُرُوا إِلَى مَنْ هُوَ أَسْفَلَ مِنْكُمْ، وَلَا تَنْظُرُوا إِلَى مَنْ هُوَ فَوْقَكُمْ، فَهُوَ أَجْدَرُ أَنْ لَا تَزِدُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ.

**“Look at those who are lower than you (financially) but do not look at those who are higher than you, lest you belittle the favors Allah conferred upon you.”**

Be satisfied with what Allah has blessed you with, thank him and be grateful for what you have. Don't look at those who have more than you and try to compete with them, as this will cause you to forget the blessings Allah has given you. Look at those who have less than you, look at our brothers and sisters in Burma, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, who have no homes, no food, no safety or security...and look at your situation in here in America compared to theirs and all of the blessings Allah has blessed us with.

The Prophet Muhammad said:

"مَنْ أَصْبَحَ مِنْكُمْ مُعَافَى فِي جَسَدِهِ آمِنًا فِي سِرِّهِ عِنْدَهُ قُوْتُ يَوْمِهِ فَكَأَنَّمَا حِيزَتْ لَهُ الدُّنْيَا

“The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: ‘Whoever among you wakes up physically healthy, feeling safe and secure within himself, with food for the day, it is as if he acquired the whole world in his possession.’”

So be grateful brothers and sisters for what we have, buy less, own less, don't throw away things that can be repaired, re-sold or donated. Hand things down, pass them on, give charity, donate your old things. Let our masjid participate in feeding the poor, organize a blanket or coat drive for the homeless, get your families involved in the process of giving rather than consuming. It's truly liberating to ignore the sales and seasonal hype brothers and sisters. When we abandon the idea of acquiring goods, the idea of Black Friday and buying everything new we falsely think we need, and we focus more on giving, we dump the whole propaganda machine on its head. By Being grateful and separating ourselves from the consumerist craziness, we set an example of how to live without avarice. We free our souls, remove a burden from our backs, and shine a light for ourselves and others. The escape from consumerism and the frantic buying of “stuff” makes us forget Allah, and being grateful and showing gratitude brings us back to Him.

This is why Allah brings together gratitude and the remembrance of Allah in the Quran:

فَاذْكُرُونِي أَذْكَرْكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُونِ - 2:152

So remember Me; I will remember you. And be grateful to Me and do not deny Me.

So be grateful to Allah for what he's blessed us with and give to others to attain contentment and true happiness.