

Prayerful Eating

(Extracted from *The Yoga Way: Food for Body, Mind & Spirit* by Sri Swami Satchidananda)

In almost every culture there are different ways to say prayers before consuming food. Most of these prayers offer an opportunity to express the gratitude we feel to have the food we are about to eat. They sometimes give us pause to also reflect upon those who are less fortunate and may not be blessed with a bountiful abundance or variety of foods. Praying together reminds us that we are a family, a community, one world.

Before each meal at Satchidananda Ashram–Yogaville, and at all Integral Yoga Institutes and Centers, a meal prayer is recited. The prayer is in the ancient Sanskrit language, renowned for its profound and calming vibrational qualities. By offering a prayer before meals, we are reminded of several things: We eat to live (rather than living to eat). We have gratitude for the many blessings in our lives. We take a few moments to calm the mind and prepare the body to receive nourishment.

This meal prayer was composed in the 8th Century by the great sage Adi Shankaracharya. The prayer is then followed by the English translation, given by Sri Swami Satchidananda*:

*Annapūrṇe Sadāpūrṇe
Śaṅkara Prāna Vallabhe
Jñāna Vairāgya Sidhyartham
Bhikṣam Dehī Cha Pārvati
Mātā Cha Pārvati Devī
Pitā Devo Maheśvaraha
Bāndhavāḥ Śiva Bhaktāha
Svadeśo Bhuvana Trayam
Hari OM Tat Sat Brahmāṇamastu
Lokāḥ Samastāḥ Sukhino Bhavantu
Jai Srī Sat Guru Mahārāj Ki! Jai!*

OM Beloved Mother Nature,
You are here on our table as our food.
You are endlessly bountiful, benefactress of all.
Please grant us health and strength,
wisdom and dispassion,
to find permanent peace and joy,
and to share this peace and joy
with one and all.
Mother Nature is my mother.
My father is the Lord of all.
The whole creation is my family.
The entire universe is my home.
I offer this unto OM, that truth which is universal.
May the entire universe be filled with
peace and joy, love and light.
May the Light of Truth overcome all darkness.
Victory to that Light!

*Hear Sri Swami Satchidananda recite the meal prayer here: www.yogaville.org (search: meal prayer).