

Dharma Yoga

Life of a Yogi Immersions

Thanksgiving, November 26, 2009

Prayers are the golden thread that tie the hearts of the world: *Sri Dharma Mittra Illuminating the Path of Yoga Teachers*

Food has always been recognized as a gift from God. People of culturally diverse and religious backgrounds all recognize God's loving generosity. As newborns, we suckle upon our mother's breast to seek nourishment. As young children and throughout our lives, food brings forth deep & profound emotional experiences. Humanity's deepest connection with food is to God.

Our humanity unites us in our appreciation to God for the sacred gift of sustenance given to us so lovingly. The act of expressing gratitude for our nourishment has been expressed by all of humankind since the beginning of time. Thanksgiving is a time to express our gratitude for the earth's bounty that was given to us by his divine grace. As compassionate and social creatures, since ancient civilization times, we have always gathered to share the nourishment with our fellow brothers and sisters. The action of sharing food with gratitude to the Lord for the provisions connects us as one and helps us to better understand our human nature.

Man realized that feeling gratitude is not enough but it must be expressed in a form of giving thanks. As a result, man began to offer prayers as an act of worship for food, the gift of life from the creator Himself. Prayers have been humanity's way to communicate this gratitude with the Supreme Being. Regardless of faith or belief, the sacred texts of the world all ask men to acknowledge the sacred gift of food. Giving thanks is an act that has included offerings, prayers, blessings and rituals to communicate our sacred connection to our life in reverence to God. As humanity continues to gather to share nature's bounty and offer thanks for the food they are about to receive, God is invited to join and the table becomes his altar. As you invite God to the table/altar, be receptive to the divine and all the gifts bestowed upon us. In the Bhagavad-Gita, it is stated that food is God.

As you gather with friends and family to "Give Thanks," take a moment to reflect who our creator is, and that he is dining with you. While we often give thanks at family meals especially on special occasions as Thanksgiving, we must remember to say grace or a food prayer on a daily basis. Remember what Sri Dharma often says, "If we take food without being grateful, it is like stealing. Because food is a gift from God and it is God, it should be treated with respect.

Remember the words of our beloved Guru's teachings: "*God is right there in the center of your chest. This is our spiritual heart. The stomach residing underneath the heart center is the Lord's Table. Practice*



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ahimsa, and consider what you are about to offer to the Lord, as your own body is his altar. As you sit to the feast, practice aparigraha and take only what you need and share equally with others. As we continue to practice yama & niyama and rest our mind on God, we will become more compassionate and our bodies will be cleansed physically, emotionally and spiritually. Our heart centers will become clearer and we will be lighter.” Sri Dharma Mittra

As you give thanks, remember that prayers are the golden thread that ties the hearts of the world. Let us embrace our universal family of brothers & sisters, and express our profound gratitude to God with a prayer for our nourishment and to pray for those without food.

Thanksgiving Prayer - Hindu Prayer for Meals

*The food is one.
All action is one.*

*We who offer the food are one.
We who understand this are one.*

The fire of hunger is also one.

Happy Thanksgiving from Dharma Yoga New York Center staff and Dharma Teachers: with love to all our friends, students and teachers around the globe. May we all be one. May this be a joyous day of remembrance of what we have!

Om Namah Shivaya Om ~ NYC

