

Preparation for Philosophy Discussion I

Sunday, January 11, 2009 (2:30 – 4:00pm)



STRENGTH
BALANCE
EQUANIMITY



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Our first meeting will focus on ideas from the Samadhi Pada (first chapter) of the Sutras. We will discuss the meaning of yoga and examine how the philosophy of yoga understands the human condition. To prepare, read Sutras I.1-6 (these are translated below if you don't yet have a Sutra book).

In addition, use your asana practice for the following explorations. You may find it useful to confine your meditations on the following ideas to a limited part of your practice. Often, limited but focused concentration will yield greater insights than general intentions.

1. Using asana practice as laboratory, we find ourselves both the subject and the object of our experiments. As you practice asana, you are both directing and receiving instructions. Observe the nature of these dual roles.
2. Emphasize your role as director and observe the effects of your asana practice. Emphasize your role as receiver and observe the effects.
3. In your practice, do you discover times when you are neither directing nor receiving? What are you doing then?

Reflect on how your experiences inform your understanding of Sutras I.1-6.

Sutras I.1-6

(Translations from BKS Iyengar's *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*)

1.1 atha yoganusasanam

With prayers for divine blessings, now begins an exposition of the sacred art of yoga.

1.2 yogah cittavrtti nirodhah

Yoga is the cessation of movements in the consciousness.

1.3 tada drastuh svarupe avasthanam

Then, the seer dwells in his own true splendor.

1.4 vrtti sarupyam itaratra

At other times, the seer identifies with the fluctuating consciousness.

1.5 vrttayah pancatayyah klista aklistah

The movements of consciousness are fivefold. They may be cognizable or non-cognizable, painful or non-painful.

1.6 pramana viparyaya vikalpa nidra smrtayah

They are caused by correct knowledge, illusion, delusion, sleep and memory.