

Preparation for Philosophy Discussion

Sunday, May 17, 2009 (2:30 – 4:00pm)



STRENGTH
BALANCE
EQUANIMITY



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Starting on the Path

The Yoga Sutras of Patañjali tell us that anyone can reach their full potential with dedicated practice. The Sadhana Pada lays out a methodical sequencing of skills to master in order to achieve this. These are the eight limbs of yoga. This month, we will begin to experiment with the first limb, Yama, meaning restraint.

Review sutras II.29- II.39. Think critically about what you read and experiment with these ideas in your asana practice and life.

1. The yamas are presented to us not as virtues, but as effective means to achieve certain results. We commonly consider non-violence, truthfulness, etc. as virtues. What changes when we take a more pragmatic stance?
2. Our first task is to establish ourselves in ahimsa, non-harming. My dictionary defines harm as damage or injury. How do we do that? Everything we eat, with the exception of some minerals, must die when we consume it. Our ancestors had to die to make room for us, just as we will die to make room for our children. Should we swat flies? Kill infections? How do we assess harm?
3. In your asana practice, do you ever stray toward harmful action? Practice a couple times meticulously avoiding what feels like it may be harmful. How does this change your experience?
4. The Sutras tell us that as we become established in ahimsa, we won't meet with resistance or hostility. As you experiment with these actions, do you find this result?