

‘A YOGI’S WAY: ASANA, VIPASSANA, JNANA’

ASANA (A SEAT ROOTED IN TRUTH)

We will practice two forms of hatha (physical) yoga – yin yoga and vinyasa yoga. Practices will emphasize our meditative, inner experience and thus help us focus our lens in the direction of how we are relating to ourselves via the physical body. Practicing in this way grounds us in the greater mandala of Raja Yoga.

Raja Yoga, literally meaning ‘royal’ yoga, is often referred to as the yoga of concentration, and is the discipline proposed by the Classical Ashtanga (Eight-Limbed) Yoga system of the sage Patanjali. Central to the practice of Raja Yoga is focusing the mind using meditation. In this spirit we will practice as wanderers have done so since beings have had legs.

YIN YOGA

Yin yoga is the practice of holding various postures for longer periods of time; sometimes as long as 15 minutes in length. Practicing the postures in this way allows one a deeper relationship with the subtle aspects of practice; and this in turn allows the body to relax in a way that creates access to the layer of tissue that comprise the muscular system's underlying foundation - namely, that of connective tissue (tendon, ligament, fascia). Due to the length of time in each posture, the majority of yin practice consists of a more gentle floor-based and meditative practice (vipassana-like); depth of experience results not from efforting, but rather arises naturally due to the extended time in each posture. This style of yoga is appropriate for all body types and experience levels.

MEDITATION VINYASA YOGA

This method of asana uses vinyasa (flow), modifying breath to create movement in the body, to allow the practitioner insight into yoga as a whole. This is a powerful form of yoga that can be both physically and mentally challenging. By using vinyasa (roughly sun salutations) as yoga's physical building block, we realize the breath as the building block of consciousness. Yoga as meditation allows us to experience honesty by transcending perceived limitations; building an appreciation of love, integrity, and union.

Sanskrit chanting is also central to this experience, allowing us to connect in new ways to ourselves as well as others.

VIPASSANA (BUDDHIST INSIGHT MEDITATION)

Meditation is the practice of calming the mind. We will use vipassana (insight) meditation to achieve this calm. Guided primarily by Buddhism’s Four Foundations of Mindfulness (Body, Sensations, Thoughts/Emotions, Dharmas), we will cultivate and anchor our experience in a way that truly allows us to rest in the reality of the present moment; and to realize that ‘this moment is like this’.

At times our meditations will also be informed greatly by Buddhism's Brahma Viharas (Heavenly Abodes) – loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity.

If you enjoy physical yoga, vipassana meditation is an excellent platform to deepen and mature your practice.

JNANA YOGA (SELF-INQUIRY)

Jnanamarga is the yogic path of self-inquiry, or 'reasoning' into reality. In the same spirit as twentieth century sages Nisargadatta and Ramana Maharshi, we will use conversations on awareness to look deeply into the timeless Advaita Vedanta question of 'Who am I?' This nondual inquiry into our true nature will help us reveal subsequently deeper, more subtle layers/sheaths (koshas) of who we are, and will ultimately lead us 'back' to the truth and reason for our life. Nothing could be more practical, as this inquiry is at the very heart of our life's (and the world's) present moment concerns.

ABOUT THIS RETREAT

Each day will begin with Noble Silence, which allows us as a community greater access to a quiet inner practice and reflective morning meal – we want mornings to be a monastic sanctuary from the ordinary hustle/bustle that is often modern culture.

At the conclusion of first meal (approximately 11am) we will come out of Noble Silence, and afternoons will be free for exploring, resting, connecting with others, getting lost and confused by India's many charms, and for doing anything else that may inspire us.

Our community will then reconvene in the later afternoon for our second asana yoga practice. Following dinner we will sit in circle and practice the art of freedom via sharing our lives and their many experiences and insights.

PRE-RETREAT READING

Autobiography of a Yogi by Yogananda

I AM THAT by Nisargadatta

Dhammapada translated by Ananda Maitreya (Buddhism)

OTHER HIGHLY SUGGESTED READING

Bhagavad-Gita translated by Swami Prabhavananda (Hinduism)

Yoga Sutra of Patanjali translated by Chip Hartranft (Yoga)

Shankara's Crest-Jewel of Discrimination translated by Swami Prabhavananda (Vedanta)

For more information, please visit: www.ayogisway.com

This retreat is sponsored in part by *Learning To Listen*: www.learningtolisten.info

www.ayogisway.com