**Essay Question:**

**Read Lines II.34 and II.35 from chapter two of the Yoga Sutra’s of Patanjali. Summerize, in your own words, the meaning of these sutra’s. Explain how they can be used in your life, with people you find difficult, in your practice and in teaching your students.**

34 - Thoughts and actions by one done in order to harm someone directly or indirectly will end up in an endless suffering for them; whether physical or psychological, done out of ignorance, avarice or anger, in a light or heavy way. The consequences will always be the same and it will always come back to the one initiating them with the same intention and greater intensity. The idea would be to think or act the exact opposite way of wanting to cause harm.

35 - Once, the idea of non-injuring or causing harm to someone is being appreciated and applied as a whole, the others will sense the peaceful mind set and will behave around with no animosity.

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Perpetrating the idea of non-harming to others will only happen by embracing it ourselves. I think the idea would also be in life to treat people the way you want to be treated: with respect, love, compassion, an open-mind… I feel it’s kind of a discipline to have towards ourselves to act, think, behave the opposite of the way our first instincts would sometimes guide us to especially in presence of people we might find difficult or while facing challenges. I think the observation of changes in our behaviour could be amazing and change the perception and have positive effects on the negative thoughts that might even sometimes be unfounded.

This notion comes for me along with letting go of the ideas of the way things should be in life, and perfection. I might have say things, behave in ways that could have hurt people because my perceptions, my ideas, my habits, my conditionings were being challenged in a way I couldn’t bare with and so I was very reactive to it. That’s why I think appreciating and seeing true values in differences (others and ours) that we’ll be able to evolve in a non-harming attitude. I don’t think that people change, so it’s for me a question of changing our perception by being curious and understanding more about the others. This comes with the idea of letting the people be themselves as I’m hoping they’ll do for me.

I think my practice has changed a lot and still is once I understood more the meaning of what teachers bring often in class about treating ourselves with kindness, compassion, gratitude… which relates to non-injuring, non-harming. It also brought awareness to the deep connection between mind and body, things I was facing in life, and on the mat and in a yoga class. I tend now to try and find more flexibility/liberty in my practice while I tried really hard for a long time to bring stability and alignment to it. I think that’s what I’m trying to do in life towards the others and myself, not to be too demanding, bring greater softness and appreciation. It’s also being aware of the limitations I have in my body and try not to force on them but work with them with softness and giving me the time I need, being patient and confident enough that changes will happen.

In teaching, I would remind my students of the importance of self-love which I feel goes with the ahimsa. I would also encourage them to simply feel more and be respectful of what they feel in their bodies and mind. I would also encourage them to find greater pleasure in what they do and feel so they can benefit from it on their mat and bring this into their life.

I would also try and give as many options as possible so students can find what feels more appropriate to them, their bodies on the day of their practice.