**Essay Question:**

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

**LIGHT ON YOGA SUTRAS OF PATANJALI**

***2.34 vitarkah himsadayah krita karita anumoditah lobha krodha moha purvakah mridu madhya adhimatrah dukha ajnana ananta phala iti pratipaksha bhavanam***

*Uncertain knowledge giving rise to violence, whether done directly or indirectly, or condoned, is caused by greed, anger or delusion in mild, moderate or intense degree. It results in endless pain and ignorance. Through introspection comes the end of pain and ignorance.*

***2.35 ahimsapratisthayam tatsannidhau vairatyagah***

*When non-violence in speech, thought and action is established, one’s aggressive nature is relinquished and others abandon hostility in one’s presence.*

**ANSWER**

**The Meaning of the Sutras**:

2.34 brings up many concepts:

-Pain and/or ignorance are caused by greed or anger or delusion.

-Greed, anger, and delusion come from ‘uncertain knowledge’ (*virtarkah*), rather than truth or reality.

-These causal relationships are true for greed, anger, or delusion at any scale— from a passing thought to a belief that governs one’s entire life.

-Patanjali teaches that we can interrupt this dynamic (uncertain knowledge🡪 greed/anger/delusion🡪 pain and suffering). Through introspection we can become wise and more aware of true reality, rather than *virtakah*. This leads to non-violence and peace.

2.35 teaches us that world peace comes from interpersonal peace which is rooted in inner peace. We must work to cultivate non-violence within ourselves (action, speech AND thought!). This integrated understanding of non-violence disarms those around us, diffusing all hostility. Uncertain knowledge leads to violence; introspection and self-knowledge leads to non-violence.

**How they can be used in your life**

These sutras teach me humility. When I am in pain, instead of lashing out in angry thought or speech, I can pause and consider that the source of the pain is uncertain knowledge, rather than truth. By meditating on this teaching, I may be able to gain insight into reality and let go of some of the anger and pain. The second sutra shows me that this is important work for me, for those around me and even the whole world, because this is the simple and slow work of making peace in the world. The sutras remind me that this work is crucial for mild and moderate events, not only the intense ones. In other words, this is important every day.

**How they can be used with people you find difficult**

Difficult people are really difficult! They challenge me and make it hard to act and think in the way I usually do. In the frame of these sutras, I can see that difficult people can serve as learning tools to further explore the illusions in my thoughts. If they are causing me pain and frustration, I must ask myself- why? The sutras teach me that pain is an illusion so a frustrating person is a queue to keep digging and searching for greater awareness. This shifts the focus away from the person and back towards self-work/knowledge.

**How they can be used in your practice**

All these issues come up in yoga: Uncertain knowledge of the asanas, of yoga, of the self; violence towards the self; greed to achieve a physical shape; anger at ones limitations; delusion about one’s practice. I have experienced all these things resulting in emotional pain (being frustrated in class or after class) and physical pain (re-aggravating an old injury after pushing myself too far). This is why it is so crucial to approach *each and every pose* with the spirit of introspection and *ahmisa*.

**How they can be used in teaching your students.**

As a teacher, I can share these personal lessons I have outlined above. In particular, I think the concept of being greedy for a pose is very widely relatable. I also think emphasizing *ahimsa* over and over again is crucial. This doesn’t translate to laziness or passivity—we can have a vigorous practice with a quality of ahimsa and a calming practice with a quality of ahimsa. This mental exercise of bringing ahimsa to every pose is a practice for life.

I also imagine that there could be times that I don’t ‘click’ with every student. There could easily be a student that I find frustrating for one reason or another. In these situations, I should re-read 2.34 ☺.