**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.**

Line II.34 of the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali pertains to negative thoughts and how we can control them. The actions that follow these negative thoughts are harmful, whether they be done by oneself, through others, or approved of by oneself. There are 3 emotions that may influence these actions, including anger, greed, and delusion, which can be mild, moderate, or intense. The actions then results in pain and ignorance, and so the way to deal with it is through cultivation of contrary thoughts, or moving in the opposite direction. For example, if we get caught up in anger through habitual patterns, rather than moving with the anger we move away and focus our attention away from it.

In Line 2.35, the sutras state that as one becomes consistent in ahimsa (non-injury, non-violence, and non-harming), other people also follow in the same direction. When someone becomes skillful in ahimsa, people pick up on this positive energy and so become influenced by this harmlessness.

One way I can apply this sutra in my life in dealing with difficult people, in my practice, and teaching students is that I can remind myself in these difficult moments that this is only a manifestation of the mind. I can remind myself that these harmful actions, as temping as they may be, are not useful to me and will bring me pain and ignorance. Harming someone that has angered me is not going to give me the satisfaction that fueled the action in the first place, but will only lead to more pain. I believe that being more self-aware in these moments and the constant reminder to move my mind in the opposite direction will be of great help in terms of being more positive and accepting of myself and others for who we are.

Specifically in dealing with difficult people, by moving in the opposite direction of anger, frustration, or whatever negative thought I’m feeling, others may pick up on this movement and follow suit. I’ve been in situations where anger just fuels more anger, so by being more removed from my emotions and more aware of the situation from an objective point of view, the energy exchange between me and the other person will change.

In dealing with my own yoga practice, I think that surrendering to whatever is will help me deal with the negative thoughts I have about my own practice. I have the tendency to force certain postures as a result of wanting to do the pose “perfectly”, and by doing so I form negative thoughts about myself. As a way to deal with this, moving towards being softer in the poses and non-harming to myself is something I can work towards.

In terms of teaching students, I can practice this concept of ahimsa by not judging my students in any way for whatever reason, whether it be a comment they make about the class, how they execute a pose, or any other reason they might anger or frustrate me.