**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.**

As human beings, our greatest asset is also our greatest fault. Over the years, we have evolved to think critically, learn from past experiences and thus, have become more intelligent. Consequently, this may have fueled our greed to the point of blurring ethical lines, even when we are not conscious of it. Theses sutras speak to this and instill a reminder that introspection can help clarify the emotional drivers behind our actions and inactions.

Foundationally, one ought to believe that all human beings are born with a clean state, meaning that their intentions are good and they have no thoughts of harming the environment in which they were brought into. Somehow, and this could potentially become a nature versus nurture, this starts to change and can be observed in young children. One might think that this is linked to negative emotions or thoughts, but there is also the absence of reinforcing positivity that makes this opposite reality hold more space. In this day and age, we are always connected (social media, internet, etc) and therefore, more and more easily influenced in order to fit in with the norm and trends of the year. We start to forget to think for ourselves and realize that just because this is the trend, it does not always make it right or true.

As I read theses sutras, I am reminded that we all could benefit from moments of silent self-reflection where we allow ourselves not only to be more neutral about things, but more positive. What we take from this Earth, we ought to give back- so how am I doing this? What I say to others or even simply what I think of others, may impact them- so what am I saying? We don’t know what hidden truths lie behind a smiling, sad or neutral face, so if we are simply more conscious of that, we could be lessening the violence present on this Earth.

In my own practice and in one where I would teach other students, I believe it is important to bring this element forward. Taking a moment to not only relax but to think about what we did or did not do, what we said or didn’t say, what we heard and didn’t react to- how are these things shaping us? How are they impacting those around us? And does this align with what we believe is right? While managing emotions is becoming more difficult, as we tend to be in the extremes, it is not only necessary to acknowledge how and why we feel, but to allow others to find this space in themselves to ask theses sometimes difficult questions, so they may find their answers.

If one wants to believe they are a good person, then should they not also challenge others to be comfortable being uncomfortable?