Essay Question: Philosophy 101

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December 27, 2016

Yoga Sutra of Patanjali - Sadhana Pada.

I have chosen two interpretations/translations of Sutras, authored by Swami Vivekananda and Chip Hartranft. My approach towards these summaries was to extract the words that have the greatest personal impact and identify the themes between the two and focus on those messages.

II.34 *vitarkā hiṁsādayaḥ kr̥ta-kārita-anumoditā lobha-krodha-moha-āpūrvakā mr̥du-madhya adhimātrā duḥkha-ajñāna-ananta-phalā iti pratiprakṣa-bhāvanam*

*Vitark* implies negative thoughts and *hims**ā* harming, Vivekananda evokes falsehood, ignorance, anger and misery while Hartranft reveals the delusion, harming and suffering.

The messages I receive from these versions are that negative thoughts are harmful and cause suffering, they are the fruit of ignorance and they will be your burden to bear.

It is a daily challenge not to fail in this practice, I am very opinionated, I work very had to remain neutral, to allow emotions to flow through but not feaster. I am fortunate, that innately I care very much for people and I could never hurt anyone on purpose.

I have been practicing non violence for over three years, and a lot has changed in my life, I am aware that I am at the beginning of these changes and that I am weak; however I hope that since I am aware and that I work hard at improving this aspect of my yoga, I will be an abled teacher.

I see myself as a hollow vessel that allows emotions to pass through. It is this approach I believe I should have when teaching. Observation, observation, observation, in being hollow when you enter a room with others you can feel if there is too much tension, fidgety students on the mat, shallow breathing. As a vessel you can receive, in allowing that to pass through you and guide you are better prepared to guide and adapt your asanas according to the groups general needs.

If you attempt to lead a group harboring negative emotions you cannot guide your students towards *nirodhah* (stillness), I believe it is my responsibility to be prepared to teach in a neutral state, without judgment or else you could harm others.

Difficult people are suffering; presenting a neutral approach may create an environment that will allow them to discover themselves.

*II.*35 *ahiṁsā-pratiṣṭhāyaṁ tat-sannidhau vairatyāghaḥ*

*Varia* implies hostility; *tyāgah*, abandonment; *ahimsā*, not harming; *sannidhau*, presence. Hartranft expresses that your state of non-violence can allow others to let go of their hostilities. Vivekananda reveals that in a state of non-violence even the cruelest behaviors can be tamed.

From these ideas I have come to interpret that in the presence of hostility your own peaceful presence (non-violence) will aid in the abandonment of that which is hostile.

On my mat I am working on emptying that which blocks me from *nirodhah,* there are some days that revel a sense of lightness and others I feel as if I carry rocks in my feet. What I have learned is the more I practice off the mat, the more I become a yogi regardless of what I can accomplish on the mat.

As a yoga teacher you are not the attraction moving from one asana to the next, you are the guide. Your *sannidhau*, creates the environment for their practice, through movement and words and touch you lead students towards stillness so they may find their own awareness.

I believe, as a teacher that if you are filled with hostility and judgment there is nowhere you can lead your students, since you yourself are lost. I believe this is a fundamental difference between a yoga teacher that can prepare you for your savasana and one that cannot.

After a class you can feel you have been restored or you can feel you have had a good workout. If both teacher and student are in the right state great things can happen. According to this sutra your state of *ahimsā* will lead others towards that state.