**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.**

Sutras found on: <http://lb.geek.rs.ba/oldstuff/swamij-mirror/index-yoga-meditation-yoga-sutras.htm>

English translation by Swami Jnaneshvara Bharati

II.34 Actions arising out of such negative thoughts are performed directly by oneself, caused to be done through others, or approved of when done by others. All of these may be preceded by, or performed through anger, greed or delusion, and can be mild, moderate or intense in nature. To remind oneself that these negative thoughts and actions are the causes of unending misery and ignorance is the contrary thought, or principle in the opposite direction that was recommended in the previous sutra.

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

I want to focus on “these negative thoughts and actions are the causes of unending misery and ignorance“. I believe this sutra is trying to portray how powerful the mind is and how dangerous negative thoughts can be (and can lead to negative actions). This is true for myself, as sometimes I get into very negative thought patterns and they can spiral into deep negativity and insecurities and it is only when I actively tell myself that these thoughts are not necessarily objectively true and try to look at it from another angle/be kinder to myself about my insecurities, that I am able to change my mood and outlook on the situation. However, this took me a long time to learn/I am still in the process of learning when my thought patterns become detrimental and what the best way is to get out of them, but I used to fester in them for a much longer time than I do now, and I’ll take that as a success. Your happiness lies (mostly) within your own hands, so if you succumb only to your negative thoughts, it will be a never-ending cycle of discontent and negativity that includes “anger, greed and delusion“.

II.35 As a Yogi becomes firmly grounded in non-injury (ahimsa), other people who come near will naturally lose any feelings of hostility.
(ahimsa pratishthayam tat vaira-tyagah)

Ahimsa/non-violence is important to look at because I believe that many of us struggle not necessarily with being non-violent towards others, but rather towards ourselves. We are our own worst critic. However, there is a sense of empowerment and wisdom that goes with being kind to ourselves when we make mistakes and accepting ourselves for who we are. We get a sense of being grounded rather than being in constant motion trying to change everything all the time. And I think what this Sutra is saying is that when we ourselves have this feeling of grounded-ness, those around us notice and will perhaps be influenced by it as well. Happiness is infectious (as they say). We are constantly influencing and being influenced by those around us, so if we act and react to things in our lives in a non-violent way, others may be inclined to do the same, or in the very least start to think about it.