

## 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 sutra's. Explain how they can be used in your life, with people you find difficult, in your practice and in teaching your students.**

II. 34 The desire to act upon unwholesome thoughts or actions or to cause or condone others toward these thoughts or actions is preventable. This is also Pratipaksha Bhavana (*when presented with disquieting thoughts or feelings, cultivate an opposite, elevated attitude*).

II.35 Embracing reverence and love for all (Ahimsa), we experience oneness.

As babies, we see the world through pure hearts and open eyes. We live the purity of Ahimsa, experiencing oneness with everyone and everything. I can honestly now say that I have observed this from the perspective of a mother. With the development of the mind's ability to discriminate, differences emerge. We must then be constantly reminded that even though people and things appear to be different, thereby creating separation, in our essences we are all the same. Mahatma Gandhi employed the principle of Ahimsa and Pratipaksha Bhavana, which he so dearly cherish, in dealing with the foreign intruders ruling India. He inspired all the citizens of India to love their enemy. The foreign empire, confused by the unforeseen attitude, was brought to its knees the British retreated in peace, holding Mahatma Gandhi in the highest esteem. The Bible compassionately tells us to "Love thy neighbour as thy self". Embracing the great virtue of Ahimsa brings the knowledge that each of us feels pain, joy disappointment, love - the full spectrum of emotions. We develop empathy with others and our individual experience becomes the experience of all. For me, the practice of Ahimsa and Pratipaksha Bhavana are shown in thousands of small actions and words throughout the day. In this way, everything is beautiful and respected. It helps remind me that consciousness resides in every molecule, that we put forth reflects back to us. A practice, called the Diving Light Invocation, I learned from the Yasodhara Ashram during my time as Creative Director for Ascent Magazine. It is a practice I constantly return to when I need to change and elevate my thinking and cultivate love and reverence of a difficult situation or person in my life.

\*\*\*\*\*

Stand erect, feet shoulder-width apart. Relax your breathing, your head, face, and neck. Keep the eyes closed and focus them on the space between the eyebrows. Picture above you a vast ocean of pure white, colourless Light . . . stretching in all directions, into eternity. Imagine some of that Light pouring down around you, bathing you completely in Light.

Exhale and slowly inhale, lifting your arms above your head as you smoothly and gradually tense the whole body.

Holding your breath, affirm to yourself with all the concentration possible:

I am created by Divine Light

I am sustained by Divine Light

I am protected by Divine Light

I am surrounded by Divine Light

I am ever growing into Divine Light.

Exhale, gradually relax, and lower your arms slowly.

Now use your imagination to **see** yourself standing in a shower of brilliant white Light.

See the Light pouring down upon you, and **see a stream of that Light flowing into the body through the top of the head, filling your entire being with Light . . . as if you were a transparent vessel, being filled with liquid Light.**

Maintaining this image, now with the arms at your sides, exhale, inhale and tense your body. Hold the breath and the tension, and again affirm,

I am created by Divine Light

I am sustained by Divine Light

I am protected by Divine Light

I am surrounded by Divine Light

I am ever growing into Divine Light

Slowly exhale and relax.

Concentrate on the **feeling** of the Light. Feel the warm glow of Divine Light suffuse your entire body, outside as well as inside.

Acknowledge silently to yourself:

“Every cell of this my physical body is filled with Divine Light;  
Every level of my consciousness is illumined with Divine Light.

The Divine Light penetrates every single cell of my being,

Every level of consciousness.

I have become a channel of pure Light.

I am One with the Light.”

The Divine Light Invocation is an exercise of will, as well as an act of surrender. Be receptive to the Light, and accept that you are now a channel of Divine Light.

Express your gratitude with deep feeling and having a desire to share this gift with someone whom you wish to help, turn your palms forward.

Continuing to see yourself filling and overflowing with Light, mentally open wide the doors of your spiritual heart centre and **let the Light stream forth from your heart centre, forming a clockwise spiral before you** which reaches up to rejoin the source of Light above.

Into the spiral of Light, place any projects and concerns that you may have. Envision them as you would like to see them, not as you fear they are. See the Light encircle them, enveloping them completely . . . and see the spiral moving high into the sky, taking the images with them. See them merge into the source of Light and become One with the Light, received by Light.

See someone that you would like to help standing before you - or the image of a woman, a man, and a child you don't know, representing all those in need of Light at this moment - in the spiral of Light. This can be yourself, if you feel in need of Light. See them healthy, happy, whole, and strong.

See the Light stream forth towards the feet of this person. The Light encircles them and spirals upward in a clockwise direction, enveloping the body completely, and filling them with radiant pure white Light. See them filled with Light, wrapped in Light, receiving everything they need from the Light.

See the spiral moving high up into the sky, taking this image along with it. See this person merge into the source of the Light and become One with the Light, blessed by the Light.

Now relax. Bring your hands together at your heart centre in a gesture of deep gratitude for the gift of the Light, and the ability to share it.

\*\*\*\*\*

This is a profound and simple yogic visualization that offers so much and transcends all. I practice, at the very least, the mantra before I teach a class, before entering in service of another as well as when I am stuck in a challenging situation and emotion. It reminds me to fill up my own cup before filling up and caring for others. We experience oneness and we must start with ourselves.