Philosophy 101 My journey about Sutra 2.34 and 2.35

Come a rain of glitters on Pauline's eyelids for her wonderful generosity in friendship as in proofreading.

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Essay Question, Sutras and different translations

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.

English

2.34: Uncertain knowledge giving rise to violence, whether done directly or indirectly, or condoned, is caused by greed, anger or delusion in mild, moderate or intense degree. It results in endless pain and ignorance. Through introspection comes the end of pain and ignorance. BKS Iyengar

2.34 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. Swami Jnaneshvara from the sanskrit

2.34 "[Unwholesome] thoughts, [such as] harming and so forth, [whether] done, caused to be done [or] approved, [whether] arising from greed, anger, [or] delusion [whether] mild, medium [or] excessive- [all these find their] unending fruition in ignorance [and] suffering; thus [a Yoga practitioner should pursue] the cultivation of [their] opposite."

2.34 "Negative thoughts and emotions are violent, in that they cause injury to yourself and others, regardless of whether they are performed by you, done by others,

or you permit them to be done.

They arise from greed, anger or delusion regardless of whether they arise from mild, moderate, or excessive emotional intensity. They result in endless misery and ignorance. Therefore, when you consistently cultivate the opposite thoughts and emotions, the unwholesome tendencies are gradually destroyed."

M. Stiles

2.35: When non-violence in speech, thought and action is established, one's aggressive nature is relinquished and others abandon hostility in one's presence. BKS Iyengar

French

- 2.33 (for information :)Si les sentiments négatifs perturbent notre mental, on doit cultiver la pensée juste. Il faut toujours réfléchir aux conséquences des mauvaises actions.
- 2.34 Par exemple, la violence ou la rudesse, qu'elles soient commises, causées ou approuvées, qu'elles soient provoquées par la colère, l'avarice ou l'orgueil, qu'elles semblent importante ou non, obstruent la méditation et mènent à l'ignorance sans fin ... même la misère. Il faut absolument réagir en adoptant les attitudes contraires.
- Traduction from the sanskrit of Daniel Pineault 2011
- 2.34 Une connaissance imparfaite {qui engendre la violence, directe, indirecte ou autorisée} est causée par l'avidité, la colère ou l'illusion à des niveaux faibles moyen ou intense. Elle a pour résultat la souffrance et l'ignorance sans fin. L'introspection permet de détruire la souffrance et l'ignorance. Traduction Cécile de Le Rue from the english text of BKS Iyengar
- 2.35 :Celui chez qui la non violence en paroles, en pensées et en actions est fermement établie perd toute agressivité et les autres abandonnent toute hostilité en sa présence.
 Traduction Cégile de Le Rue from the anglish text of RKS lugger

Traduction Cécile de Le Rue from the english text of BKS Iyengar

2.35 Au fur et à mesure que le yogi devient fermement bien établi dans la non-blessure (ahimsa), d'autres personnes qui arrivent à proximité perdront naturellement tout sentiment d'hostilité. Swami Jnaneshvara Bharati

2.35: La non violence stimule des sentiments amicaux autour de nous. Traduction from the sanskrit of Daniel Pineault 2011

My approach and context

Here is a commentary about the 2.34 and 2.35 of Pantanjali's Sutras. I tried to find different versions and different translations of them, especially to understand it in my mother tongue but I confess I didn't find anything really satisfying in french. I began this work a year ago, reading and writing very slowly few words about these sutras. A part of Indian culture is really easy to "understand" for me. I spontaneously make a connexion with what I describe as an universal sensation, there is nothing to do, no efforts. I guess it matches with my way of life, how I grew up, the consciousness of my bodymind, the connexion with nature, a kind of natural common sens. Anyway, I'm not talking about a conventional meaning of understanding, dealing with the mental process through reason. To me, it is more much a "direct integration". I often use it instinctively to read situations, people or books.

But it is not the same for these aphorisms, partially because they look dogmatic. I guess I don't have the 'cultural key' to be penetrated by them. The fact that "easy integration" does not work on me with these lines for the previous reasons, made me face difficulties. It was a real work to do not to reject the dogmatic and dull aspects of these words so I decided to undertake it as an experience.

Of course, eventually, it is getting interesting and the more I practice, the more I teach, the more I live experiences the more it is getting deeper and deeper, quiet, and someway unexpected in the image of my yoga experience. It is not about lessons or rules, like the form could induce, it is always in motion, it is a material alive. It does not look like a race when you know the distance, the quality of the floor and the goal, when you just need to follow advice and protocol to do it right. It is a real quest, you do not know exactly what is going to happen, you don't know what you are about to imagine and create in order to go further. Especially when going further means : let the whirlpool take you and sink you down to an higher point. The taste of that adventure success is never the one expected. I discovered diseases within me this past year. It has been here for a long time and it came out for some reasons. I had to go through such suffering and darkness, loosing totally myself, my ego and believing I was dying, trying to be confident in the emptiness, searching and stopping to search anything. It was the hell and I knew it was my hell and, of course, I felt guilty to have fed such things, « with my help ». Not unrelated, it has been two years during which I experimented daily hate, anger and bad thoughts from someone close.

Applied philosophy is as much exciting and rich than dogma is boring and i nfertile but it is a very risky game where I had to accept to be lost to have the right to keep moving forward.

That is why, the words I am writing seem that actual, so «real», still too real to use it as an experience in my teaching.

In one hand it appears to be like if I cannot really answer induced questions and just try to live my experiences as good as I can (with the hope it would make me skilled enough to eventually share and teach). In the other hand, the few classes I gave during medical leave were such a fresh breath and had such a positive echo in my life that I now deeply understand that teaching and learning are not two separate and unrelated spaces.

Introduction

The yoga sutras are a combination of aphorisms and it is usual to pick one as « the day thought ». The fact remains that it is also a global piece of work very well builded chapter by chapter whereby concepts get more and more precise in order to guide the reader through his journey. The two sutras previously quoted come from the second chapter which is about the person in action who experiences pain and wants to get rid of it. To me these concerns exist especially in the case of a yoga teacher. In the teaching process, there is that very same question around the notion of action that the one we have to deal with daily, because it is very real and valuable concept in our society at the present time.

To try to write about this sutra I needed to think about "uncertain knowledge" in a way of incomplete vision of the reality, when witness and perception are still confused together.

In sutras, introspection is the suggested way to put distance between witness and his perception, between subject and emotions. To me, introspection is a yoga. It is a practice that helps to read the innerworld and the outerworld. It brings knowledge (facts, feelings and experiences), in other words I would say discernment.

First part : Essay on Sutra 2.34

- 2.34: Uncertain knowledge giving rise to violence, whether done directly or indirectly, or condoned, is caused by greed, anger or delusion in mild, moderate or intense degree. It results in endless pain and ignorance. Through introspection comes the end of pain and ignorance.
- BKS Iyengar

Dual approach

To me, the common dual approach of Sutras is the easiest way to understand and translate aphorisms. The indicated way to manage violent emotions according to that sutra is introspection.

It is not a really clear indication of what to do, in a practical way, when you experience anger, illusion or avidity.

When I read some sutras (and their translations) of the Yoga Sutra, I understand through the principles something like that : «If you see anger at the corner's street, don't look at it -it's dirty- think about love and compassion and everything gonna be alright with your karma ».

Following some translation, focusing on the opposite feelings -by introspection, in an active thoughtshould help to switch bad feelings. In my experiences, I can say it is a charming idea but the point is : practically, it is often inefficient. I feel like if focusing on the opposite feelings don't erase bad thoughts. It could hide it for a moment but often it is getting worst eventually. Anger, pleasure and illusion are present in my life even if I try to convince me of the opposite, even if I'm afraid it is going to take me for a bad trip.

This concept of opposite thoughts is a kind of inner fight even though my research through Yoga is more an union in myself. Moreover, that "fighting" concept could induce a pressure to success and if not, automatically generate deception or guilt. However it is exactly this self-defeating feelings we don't want to add to a confuse situation.

To me, reject "bad feelings" is not a good deal if you really want to be quiet with them.

The mental image of getting out of a dark place to a bright one is really helpful when lightning has already been done on the situation in order to break an automatism. But breaking an automatism is a work to do once old patterns are recognized, understood and accepted. This step should be more simple precisely because it is accepted and thereby enlightened. It becomes a joy to change things, to move or decide of a renew.

However, the point is precisely on the first step in that Sutra, we want to bring the light on ignorance.

Non dual approach

I'm more sensitive to a non-dual approach according to the old tantric tradition.

Anger or sadness lead me sometimes. It is the manifestation of something within me. Looking at it, to put the maximum distance between what I feel and what I am, is the best way I found (and observed around me) to go through the curtain to the window's light . Look at it with compassion, even sweetly, like if it was a injured child (what it is actually) make it slowly disappear. Sometimes it takes so much time, but it still is an exciting journey, always successful in a special way.

I believe that anger, sadness, illusion are in fact tools. If something makes me angry, I have a nice cue to understand that what is happening is not so good for me. It could be that it oversteps my bounds or induce I was hurt by something similar in the past. That cue occurs when you have to work on it, it is an opportunity to noticed, take care of, recover and finally heal. I noticed that it is often an indication of what I need to be prepared for the follow-up. Anyway, it happens in a time where we can welcome it. That approach consider people, emotions and life as a process, a movement, changing faces every time, not like an established picture carved in stone. That is why it can be scary, but nevertheless close from my reality. The only thing I can count on is my breath, and it's always moving.

A « physiology » of an emotional process

When I practice or teach Yoga, I feel very committed and responsible. It is not only a question of loyalty matching with the body, it is more about let the awareness as wide as possible to be efficient, simple and finally right (fitting with the moment, the person, the place...) I know how a « simple » class well leaded may turn the mood and allows people to unlock bodymind. To reach this quality of guidance, I know I must feel connected with what I am doing and why. « Physiology » of the emotional process is a very interesting entry point to get this comfort.

West culture use the word « physiology » to define the organisation that connects our different systems (nervous, skeletal, organs...) More generally, the physiology is the study of the fonctions and properties of an organized system. Faithful to the oriental medicine, which connect more spontaneously physical body with energetic and emotional body, I believe that emotions follow a specific system, itself part of a larger body physiology.

To support that vision of non-dual approach, I need to expose my view of this operating emotional process.

First, we have to know the body is a truly good soldier. We should picture this idea of him like doing the best for his country {us} all the time, at every point of our life. And, he is definitely a positive guy. The vital process of body learning follows a pretty simple movement. We learn from the sensations we feel each time an information comes (wind on the skin, loudness of a voice, warmth of such drink, freshness of another... so much different informations we are constantly exposed to). That perception leads to a reaction. A part of those reactions are emotions. It is made to protect us (by reflex and learning process) and keep ourselves in a stable state (by discharging). It is a kind of emotional homeostasis or if we like to see it larger, it is part of homeostasis.

Take an example.

I'm two years old. I move my hand near to a hot pot. My thermo-receptors send an « hot » information but do not know yet it could be hurting. The soldier inside, which is eager to learn, is all ears ; remember he wants our survival, our protection, for that reason he knows he has to learn. Eventually the pot burns my skin, it hurts (and just among ourselves, it is terribly unfair). A lot of pain and fear arise in me, but, luckily, my good soldier is here, he sends the order to scream and cry to discharge all these emotions and makes it clear to learn : « Hot is hurting for my skin. A pot could be hot » etc...

And finally, it is not so unfair because I have an idea of how to react next time I am in presence of a pot : careful. My soldier could throw away that painful memory and keep the idea hot=dangerous... he just built a reflex.

Often it is not an isolated process and one reaction engaged another reaction which engage another perception, etc... (like a discussion). From that chain of perceptions and reactions, we learn and grow up.

Frustration

If one of these reactions is prevented, for any reason (often because safe spaces are missing), emotions are not discharged and it brings frustration. It happens a lot with our cultural pattern because we consider some feelings as "bad" and prevent reaction as fear of suffering.

Except that, our soldier needs space and order to be receptive enough to the learning process ; because all that frustration prevents him to face new adventures and new experiences. So, in order to keep experiencing -his favorite job- he compress frustrations and put it aside to be ejected as soon as possible.

This ejection is often allowed when we are in safe places, it is the right time for us to discharged frustrations. Babys do that very well. They stored frustrations all day long, and if they are lucky to be at home, in a safe place, every evening for exemple, they can cry every violent and crazy things they have not been able to express during the day. And... everything is okay, the learning system can keep processing.

Buried emotions

• First degree

As said earlier, expressing frustrations, like anger or sadness, is often socially unadmitted, because seen as bad.

The expression of some frustrations is then delay, and delay, and delay (and often the frustration is also repeated several time).

The wondersoldier within us who embodied our operating system, is going to send us signals to express his concern (a cold, feeling blue...). Indeed as long as it is not considered, it takes space, it brings fears and stress and moreover, it is very active : it wants to be seen and supported! Conscient that we must do something with it to keep the security safe, our good inner soldier express more and more the dysfunction. For him, it means that we could be in danger because a whole lot of frustrations could prevent the right operation of homeostasis, which is his master.

• Second degree

If all those alarms are not took in consideration, our good soldier will eventually decide to change strategy. To stop this demonstration of inappropriate frustration, he will hide embarrassing emotions we don't want to deal with. So, he makes a package and buried it. He stores it somewhere, everywhere (often in different places at the same time, in small muscles, brain, organs, energy chains...). And e ach time we are not able any more to process data efficiently enough, our safety control tour will use that efficient way to store repressed feelings. It slowly but surely becomes buried emotions.

In safer times, he would dig it out, take care and try to fix them, remember, he is desperately positive. And then? What do we do if an emotion of that kind happens to arise? So, our soldier choose something acceptable in our life (smiling, eating, drinking, moving...), he covers the package with it and he orders the brain to go in that chosen direction every time he will face something about that unacceptable emotion/frustration. He builds a survival mechanism.

As a rough example : Something makes me sad ? How am I gonna react ? What knowledge and experiences of sadness have I ...? Ouch! Machine out of order. Come back in two years and in the meantime, pick a snack !

Of course, at that point of buried emotion, it interfers with our learning system, until it becomes dangerous for us and interfers with a correct ontogeny if we are too young. In a word, it prevents a functional homeostasis.

Survival mechanism

The fact of burying frustrations is a mechanism allowed to keep going, even with a disorder. It is a sort of mind flexibility which gives us a more or less large leeway very useful in life.

Because even if it looks like an emergency system not to abuse of, it happens in fact a lot to be weak in life (as when we are a child) and it is obviously not the right time to go through some difficulties. This mechanism is designed to help us to survive.

Also, despite unwelcome appearence, we really need this survival mecanism in the time we grow up and build our personality in order not to go crazy. It is a matter of priority.

And, in the same time, we build ourselves with these crutches and it becomes sometimes difficult firstly to see it and then to accept to be separate of that loved mechanism. Indeed, even if it becomes at some point useless and unnecessary, it used to be our salvation and the gratefulness makes us attached to that crutch.

Life and death of a buried emotion or the headstrong soldier

As soon as it will be possible (or not possible to stand anymore) the duty of our brave small soldier will be to alert us by any means (a pneumonia, a broken leg, a gentle depression...) and try to manage this forgotten frustration.

Sometimes, the indicated time is far from the original frustration. That is why, years after, we might have disproportionate behaviours if a similar situation pops up. It is a psychological system but it also works in the body memory because body and mind are connected by many ways. Body is just another entry point to the same issue. (Does the karma fonction the same ?). From our birth, each time we produce buried frustrations, our safety control tour put a marker (in our body, in our brain, it does not matter, it is the same) but reasons are so deeply buried that we don't even remember the cause of our frustration.

For that reason among others, it could seem so complicated to look on those unexpressed grieves once we grew up.

The role of our brave soldier is to remind us that a crutch is just a crutch, and despite everything try to remove it. It does not matter if it is not right now, nor if it takes a long time.

Nevertheless, the most we delay the outcome, the most buried emotions markers will emerge, until it takes so much space in our body that we have to use all our energy to deal with it. At this point it looks like an obsession and we often think we are turning crazy. But it is the simple demonstration of a disconnection we cannot delay anymore to keep having a normal operation.

^{*[}We could observe the same with the body. When something is wrong but we don't want to look at it, it gives a more and more important signal to our attention until we couldn't ignore it anymore. As a simple example : I have a headache but I keep going as I am used to, there is much more probabilities I feel sick the day after than if I take some rest and look at that stop signal.]

Pain

I would like to have a word on that subject even if I'm conscious it is a very large chapter because according to me, we keep quiet about pain far too often.

We do not like complaints. Once again, feeling bad is not really seen like an « acceptable » state, or not for too long. Recognize it is yet a good way out or a good entry point.

Too many buried emotions, buried for too long, induce pain in our body, psychologically, emotionally and mentally. Sometimes it can be so huge, sometimes we get accustomed to pain (and it is even a higher difficulty to reveal disorders) and very often that pain is confused and confusing. It comes from so far that it takes many forms and diverted ways, so many that it is really disheartening.

A good trail in that kind of knot is to look on injunction about this unacceptable feelings during our childhood and try to heal that damage before anything. It will help to enlighten the automatism, accept the pain, then the life movement and the transformation. Pain always comes from an inner fight (sometimes well hidden) against ourselves, often against our own transformation.

In concrete terms

Good news is that we don't have to remember the cause of our frustration to go through the mechanism and undo the buried package. There is not only one magic formula, there is hundred of them, because our brave soldier is always here, awaiting to give even the smallest help he can.

Nevertheless, I could noticed a beautiful way to move forward keeping the balance of that two seemingly contradictory qualities : the ability to abandon and the consciousness of your own creativity.

To me, it is more a frame of mind than a recipe.

So, if it is well done, to move (asanas, dance, sports), to breath (walk, pranayama, fresh air) and to express ourselves (singing, painting, writing) are fantastic ways to go through anger, illusion and sadness. These unpleasant emotions are often the manifestation of buried emotions and they live in our five koshas within and around our physical body. Which means it is also located in muscles, fascias, joints, fluids, brain, energy, aura, all at once. It is possible to heal it one step at the time but it would be so tedious while moving, breathing and creating make waves and vibrations that goes everywhere, deeply in the five koshas, acting like healing magic.

Yoga practice may induce the creation of that different vibrations, that is why it is a fantastic experience, moreover, very accessible to anybody.

But we must remember that yoga is rarely a way to reveal yourself to your own, but rather a beautiful way to arrive to a point of acceptance and as a bonus, smiling.

Integrity

The last point I would like to approach about the 2.34 is a very important point in Yoga : integrity. The words « directly or indirectly, or condoned» and « in mild, moderate or intense degree » underpin the concept of knowledge in a way of consistency in our vision and actions. We must adopt a global vision. These previously quoted words seem to question obsolete principles ; principles that have been around for years, we don't really remember exactly why, often they are just an artificial reason became a crutch.

An example would be : « I don't eat meat at all because it is bad to make animals suffer but I eat a lot of low quality cheese without minding the suffering behind ».

As I read this sutras, 1963 Stanley Milgram's experiments* clearly appeared to me as an eloquent illustration of condoned violence. They reveal the recurrence of a sort of « active » condoned violence and its complex relation to the obedience.

Krta Kritã Anumodithãh and Mrdu, Madhya, Adhimãtrah remind me to stay careful, always in movement, loyal to my intuition even if it told me something I won't usually head for.

*An article in American Psychologist sums up Milgram's obedience experiments:

In Milgram's basic paradigm, a subject walks into a laboratory believing that s/he is about to take part in a study of memory and learning. After being assigned the role of a teacher, the subject is asked to teach word associations to a fellow subject (who in reality is a collaborator of the experimenter). The teaching method, however, is unconventional—administering increasingly higher electric shocks to the learner. Once the presumed shock level reaches a certain point, the subject is thrown into a conflict. On the one hand, the strapped learner demands to be set free, he appears to suffer pain, and going all the way may pose a risk to his health. On the other hand, the experimenter, if asked, insists that the experiment is not as unhealthy as it appears to be, and that the teacher must go on. In sharp contrast to the expectations of professionals and laymen alike, some 65% of all subjects continue to administer shocks up to the very highest levels.

Second part : sutra 2.35

2.35: When non-violence in speech, thought and action is established, one's aggressive nature is relinquished and others abandon hostility in one's presence.
BKS Iyengar

Testimony

It is easy to understand because we all experienced that at least once in our lifetime : being in the compagy of somebody and feeling quiet and confident just by the presence of that magnificent person. In these moments, I also have the recurrent feeling to understand things in a different way, as if I was watching with that different look which seems to be the one of that enlightened person.

The fact is that human beings can spread their vibrations on other people (more or less, consciously or not), thus change their perceptions and then their actions and reactions. It happens all the time, in any relationship. Of course it is kind of magical because reasons are imperceptible through the senses we use to apprehend the world. It is really nice to experience or to be the witness of it (and I'm always grateful when it happens). In these moments the magical presence impregnate people and objects and we can understand it as the result of a long journey.

Consciousness of the layers

During my Hypnosis therapy, I learned a lot of things about the kosha's system. They concretely coexist within and outside our body organized like onions' layers. We really live like in a bubble, and our koshas carrie all our memory and history, protecting us from some things and concealing some others. There is many communication ways between these different layers.

We can modify layers' vibrations of each kochas by ourselves, from the inside, or by the outside, including through contact with other people. Indeed, if vibrations change, our eye, among other senses, perceives in a different way. We can imagine this process like if we were wearing tinted glasses. If you change the filter, your perception also changes. With a red filter you would not see all the red things around you, but the red things do still exist anyway. Change the filter's color for a blue one, and red things will appear clearly. The expression « to change point of view » takes on its full meaning (and it is one my favorite sport).

This can be a conscious or even a voluntary process to try to get out of a « bad loop ». We can also decide to meet somebody we love, which we feel good with or to go singing in a place where we feel quiet. That « layer's cleaning » modify the vibration of each kochas. If vibrations are strong enough (or well adapted) to get the upper hand on the bad mood, we can get some satisfying changes and eventually get rid of burdens from the past.

One territory, an infinity of maps

That consciousness about layers is an incredible knowledge. It explains why our choices and reactions are often wider than expected especially when we travel, discuss things, move, breath... anything that opens mind and body. From there, every visible thing is a different map of the same invisible territory. It is exactly what I feel I can do when I feel a strong communication with people : trying to share another map of the territory, enlarging apprehension of the world. Talking about bones, tissues and muscles and their place in the body, in space is a map, talking about flows of energies, or trying to focus on emotions from the outside are as many maps of the same territory. Territory is real, maps are illusions, tools, but they could definitly help us to read this confused reality and eventually change our perceptions, our reactions, our actions.

The wonderful promise

To me, that sutra is formidably optimistic.

It talks about how magical it is to share after we have worked on ourselves and found a quiet and confident place. It also talks about the generosity of love vibrations and about the power of that sharing, contagious. It helps to go forward and keeps hope even in dark places when I think of the positive and powerful results of *Tapas* and *Svadhyaya* on me and around me. The further I go into it, the more established and rich will be my non-violent life.

And, I just understood it is not only a question of hard work (in that direction), it is also a question of generosity toward myself. I have a lot to learn about that. One of the most generous thing I did for me in my life is my yoga teacher training. I learned so much, I worked hard and I did it for myself, with less pressure than usual. I came out of that experience more quiet and healthier than I have never been in my life. Everybody around me enjoyed it and took advantage of that generous work I did for me in the first place.

Today, the challenge is here for me. Be generous with myself in my steady but intense research. I am still working on it. I still feel the pain of that uncompromising behaviours in each of my nerves while I'm writing. Then, I guess it is too actual to find good words to talk about it. Next step : *Samtosha*.