

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.

The translation I used for this essay are from Paul Harvey and can be found here :

<https://yogastudies.org/>

Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 34

वितर्का हिंसादयः कृतकारितानुमोदिता लोभक्रोधमोहापूर्वका मृदुमध्य अधिमात्रा दुःखाज्ञानानन्तफला इति प्रतिपक्षभावनम्
॥३४॥

vitarkāḥ hiṃsā-ādayaḥ kṛta-kārita-anumoditāḥ lobha-krodha-moha-pūrvakāḥ mṛdu-madhyā-adhimātrāḥ
duḥkha-ajñāna-ananta-phalāḥ iti pratipakṣa-bhāvanam ||34||

Negative deliberation such as harming and the rest;

may be done, brought about, or by approval;

is preceded by greed, anger or delusion;

may be mild, moderate or excessive;

its endless fruits are suffering and ignorance;

thus cultivate the opposite side.

Mental noise leads to suffering. Meditating on the contrary means practicing to think less. Practicing staying still and present. This a practice of every moment. Like taking a shower in the mind the way you take care of cleaning your body. Liberating the head of unnecessary thoughts. This is a calmer frequency to cultivate, a journey into stillness.

With people you find difficult, the practice of presence and meditation gives you perspective. It helps you to not get buried into reactivity and to not feed the narrative of difficult situations in relationships over and over. Hectic mind will replay hurtful stories and behaviors, making conflicts vivid even if the moment as already pass. A calm mind gives you the possibility to know when an action is required or when it is better to let it be. With a calm, centered mind, you will know when taking action is required.

In the practice of yoga, meditation is key. From where I stand now in my yoga journey, I would say presence is yoga. Meditation is the most important part of the practice. Asana's are a getaway through the body to access presence.

Meditation is easier after asana. I keep an important space for meditation in teaching a class of asana. I observe more openness and ease (body and mind) in the students practice when we take time to work on the stream of thoughts. So before starting class, we put an effort to leave part of it at the door.

Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 35

अहिंसाप्रतिष्ठायं तत्सन्निधौ वैरत्यागः ॥३५॥

ahiṃsā-pratiṣṭhāyāṃ tat-saṃnidhau vaira-tyāgaḥ ||35||

In the presence of that established in non-harming,
animosity is forsaken.

My interpretation of this sutra is to adopt a non-violent attitude inside ourself (practicing non-judgment in life, respect ourselves and others)

I believe this Sutra is underlying the importance of a positive inner attitude which can influence our own life and the life of others.

Cultivating inner-peace will inevitably lead to receiving peace. Energies that we put into the world are coloring what comes back at us. Perpetuating an attitude of non-violence affects our relationships. Daily, practicing those qualities of presence and non-harming brings clarity. With time we get better able to recognize if the people and things we let enter your life are matching the inner attitude we have chosen to cultivate.

In the practice of yoga (talking about meditation and asana practice) this practice of non-judgment and non-violent attitude is bringing freedom to the practice. It helps to deal with difficulties, doubts and contractions that sometimes come up. It helps to stay available to receive the teachings with openness.

In teachings, I see this sutra as an invitation to apply total inclusion in classes. To welcome all students with the same warmth and friendliness regardless of their background, gender, color, status...

Thank you!

