**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.**

**1. Definition of the Sutras**

II.34

*We ourselves may act upon unwholesome thoughts, such as wanting to harm someone, or we may cause or condone them in others; unwholesome thoughts may arise from greed, anger, or delusion; they may be mild, moderate, or extreme; but they never cease to ripen into ignorance and suffering. This is why one must cultivate wholesome thoughts.*

II.35

*Being firmly grounded in non-violence creates an atmosphere in which others can let go of their hostility*

**Introduction**

Non-violence has been introduced by Pantajali through the concept of Ahimsa in the Eight Limbs of Classical Yoga and has also been described in sutras II.34 and II.35. The principle of non-violence encourages us to be more kind and compassionated human being. It guides how we are in the world and influences our behaviors towards ourselves and others.

**Non-violence in the world**

Non-violence takes place in our everyday decisions. It is present in the food we choose to eat, the produces we decide to consume or the way we treat our environment.

I for example stopped to buy and eat meat years ago for health reasons after I read the book *China Study*. Then I continued to educate myself and realized that I didn’t want to encourage animal cruelty and exploitation.

Same goes with the products I buy. First, I make sure I really need something before I buy anything. Second, I ask myself questions to make more conscious choices. I look at the country of origin, I look at the company mission and values, if the product is Fairtrade and if the material is environmentally friendly (biodegradable / recyclable).

**Non-violence towards ourselves**

I practice non-violence towards myself by adopting healthy habits. I nourish my body with healthy foods and exercise everyday. I also have a daily meditation practice that really helps to regulate my emotions. These life choices have brought me joy and energy.

I also pay attention to my internal dialog. I can sometimes be very self-critical and judgemental. I try to catch myself and rephase my thinking as if I was talking to a friend. I believe that if I can’t have compassion for myself, I’ll have a hard time being compassionated towards others.

**Non-violence towards others**

We all have in our life, people we don’t have an affinity with. When I get into an argument with someone, I remember my reading from ACIM: *In my defenselessness my safety lies* because I rather be happy than be right. I really struggle with this lesson and I have a hard time not fighting back. I have to remind myself that we don’t eliminate violence with violence.

**Non-violence in Yoga**

As yoga teacher, I believe it’s our responsibility to treat every student with respect. We need to be welcoming and adapt our teaching to help students with disabilities or other kind of conditions. It is also in our function to communicate in a respectful manner if we need to cue, adjust, or answer a student’s question.

In my personal practice, because I’m have a type A personality, I tend to push myself beyond my limits. My yoga teacher training helped me to be more aware of my body and honor my boundaries. I also learned to enjoy more slower pace classes. I feel as if my yoga practice has become a journey instead of a destination …and by the same occasion, my life too.

**Conclusion**

It is irrefutable that non-violence is a principle that needs to be applied to our life to create a loving and peaceful world. Easier said than done, we need to stay aware of our thoughts and behaviors if we want to act according to this principle. By practicing mediation, breathing and physical yoga exercises we can attain a calm state of mind. If we do our part with a constant disciplined practice and if we do this together as a community, we can make an impact for long lasting changes.