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Natural Yogis - Angelic Beings of Light

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Last fall, we started exploring the first two ways of the experiencing Yoga in our body-minds before uncovering the open Heart (Yoga S?tra-s I, 18).



The Five Routes to Experiencing Yoga:

Abhy?sa? By practicing ? (Yoga S?tra-s) YS I, 12-16

Vair?gya ? By detaching - YS I, 12-16

Bhavapratyayo ? By birth (naturally born in a state of Yoga) ? YS I, 19

?raddh? ? By trusting in your goal - YS I, 20-22

??vara pranidh?n? - By surrendering to the Highest - YS I, 23

This month, we will discover the last three routes to this mystery called Yoga: by birth, by trust, and by surrender. Today, we will delve into the angelic realm of experiencing Yoga by birth and consider the up and down sides of being naturally gifted in any domain.

Patanjali's Yoga S?tra-s (YS) I-19 Bhava(to be)-pratyayo(with an empty mind)
videha(angelic)-prak?ti(nature/bodies)-lay?n?m(reincarnation)

There are also angelic beings who reincarnate with empty minds.

Natural Yogis ? No Effort Required

Have you ever met someone who seems to radiate Light and kindness with an effortless ease? Does it seem like they are calm and relaxed most of the time even though they do no spiritual practices nor have a history of such practices? If so, they might be a natural yogi, born with an empty mind and open Heart!

Patanjali says there are such deva-s (angelic beings of Light) who don?t have to go through the process of transformation (YS I, 17-18) that the rest of us do. They don?t have to practice Patanjali's 8-limbed approach (YS II, 29) to Yoga at all. They don?t have to do anything to empty their minds and enter into a state of samadhi (YS I, 18). They are naturally in that state of enlightenment by birth.

These are likely the Buddhist bodhisattva-s (pure=sattvic + minds=buddhi-s) of the Yoga tradition, who achieved enlightenment (samadhi) in a previous life, but have chosen to reincarnate to serve the world's suffering.

The Upside of Being a Natural Yogi

This s?tra reminds me of a colleague at my University who never does spiritual practices and in fact, says she is an atheist, but is one of the most evolved souls I have ever met. We all so appreciate her because of her calm, loving demeanor with seeming effortless and stability. With such stability, you can always count on her to be there for you when the chips are down ? a rock in a sometimes stormy world.

When I compare myself to her, I know that it has taken me 20 years of practice to achieve such stability and even now, I still get thrown off course at times by the karmic dumps of life! How can it be? How can she always be so calm and seemingly unfettered by challenging life events? Maybe she was just born that way!

The Downside of Being Naturally Gifted

Then, I am reminded that in order to become a great Yoga teacher, one needs to pass through the fires of transformation personally, not theoretically. Those special individuals who are natural born yogi-s are not always the best Yoga teachers because they haven?t had to make the same efforts as the rest of us have to achieve stability of body, breath, and mind.

In the same way, those who are naturally gifted and good at their jobs often get easily bored. They are always switching careers because they are not being challenged enough. They also get impatient easily because they can?t suffer fools gladly.

The Gift of Experience

The naturally gifted in any area, in fact, are not usually the best teachers. For instance, the best hockey coaches are sometimes those who were only mediocre players in the NHL. A fabulous music teacher might never have made a living as a performing artist at the top of her

field.

There is a gift to having learnt through the school of hard knocks and challenging life experiences. We who have learnt the hard way often have much compassion for others who are still in the throes of suffering. We can offer solace based on personal experience to those who are still in the process of transformation. We can become great teachers of how to move from darkness to Light because we ourselves have been in our students' or friends' shoes not so long ago.

Yoga Sutra Questions

What do you do for a living? Does it involve something you are naturally gifted in or something that presents some challenges for you to overcome? Does it offer you room to evolve and grow as a person? If not, have you considered changing to a career that does?

Yoga Sutra ^[1]

1-19 ^[2]

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