



*Patanjali & The Integrative Amrit Method of Yoga:  
A Synthesis for Oneness*

*by Gurudev Shri Amritji*



## Awards, Titles & Honorary Degrees

<i>Yogi Raj for Life</i>	2016
World Conference of Ayurveda, Pune	
<i>International Yoga Grand Master Title</i>	2013
From H.H. Jagat Guru Amrta Suryananda Maharaj (Padma Shri).	
Only previous recipients were B.K.S. Iyengar and Dr. Nagendra, SVYASA University, Bangalore	
<i>Maharshi Sandipani Encomium</i>	2013
Ujjain Yoga Life Society International – 4th International Conference, Ujjain, India	
<i>Grand Master of Yoga Title – World Yoga Day</i>	2012
Conferred by Portuguese Yoga Confederation, Lisbon, Portugal	
<i>Inaugural Fellow of the Council for Yoga Accreditation International (CYAI)</i>	2012
CYAI recognized four inaugural Fellows who have demonstrated extraordinary achievement and contribution to the field of yoga	
<i>Lifetime Achievement Award</i>	2011
International Ayurveda Academy (IAA) and Tathagat Foundation, Dubai	
<i>Yogiraj Award</i>	2011
from Paramanand Institute of Yoga Sciences & Research – Indore, India	
<i>Patanjali Award for Excellence in Yogic Research &amp; Teachings in North America</i>	2010
Presented by the Association of Ayurvedic Practitioners of North America (AAPNA)	
<i>Yogacharya Award</i>	1993
Awarded by the Pan-American Yoga Association by Government of Buenos Aires	
<i>Padma Vibhushan Nomination</i>	1992
Nominated by the late Prime Minister of India, Shri Chandra Shekhar, with a positive response for the following year from then Prime Minister Narasimha Rao	
<i>Vishwa Yoga Ratna</i>	1987
Awarded by the World Development Parliament of India and presented by the President of India to 10 world-renowned teachers from 10 countries	
<i>Jagadacharya</i>	1986
Awarded by the World Religious Parliament of India in New Delhi, established in 1894 by Swami Vivekananda; this honorable title was awarded to five world renowned teachers for spreading Hindu philosophy and wisdom.	
<i>Maharishi</i>	1982
Awarded by H.H. Vedarshanacharya Sadguru, Chancellor of Udasin Sanskrit University	
<i>Yogacharya</i>	1980
Conferred by H.H. Swami Shri Kripalvanandji in honor of years of intensive study, teachings and practice of philosophy and spiritual principles of yoga.	
<i>Acharya Pravara Award</i>	
1975	
Awarded by Swami Vedavyasanandji, Chancellor of Rishikul Sanskrit University, Haridwar	
<i>Doctor of Yoga</i>	1974
Awarded by H.H. Jagadaguru Shakaracharya Maharaj (Dwarka), spiritual leader of Hinduism for outstanding contributions to humanity.	
<i>Title of Yogi</i>	1969
Conferred by H.H. Swami Shri Kripalvanandji for spreading the knowledge of philosophy, principles and practice of yoga	



# *Patanjali and the Integrative Amrit Method of Yoga: A Synthesis for Oneness*

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*When there is mind, you are in ego. When there is no mind, you are in yoga.*

More people than ever before are ready for a spiritual dimension and depth to the practice of yoga. This is reflected dramatically in the changing themes of today's books, magazines, professional journals, popular seminars and many systems of personal growth, psychology, philosophy and spiritual teachings.

**The Widespread Therapeutic Adaptation of Yoga.** As yoga has become progressively more popular, the depth of its practice has been modified and sometimes compromised in response to professional fields and specialized applications such as physical and other therapies, business, sports, dance, athletics and personal growth and healing programs. It has been adapted for health care modalities, drug and alcohol rehabilitation and even prisons. The modified versions of yoga have allowed its practical application to appeal to millions of people all over the world. The scientific validations of yoga have gained a high degree of recognition and credibility and have been widely admitted into the mainstream of even conservative business organizations and societies worldwide.

**Yoga Has Changed the West but the West Has Also Changed Yoga.** It is obvious, however, that as yoga has changed the West, the West has changed yoga. Now that the West is waking up to the spiritual values of life, it is ready to explore and adopt yoga in its original depth and the glory as taught by the great realized master Yogi Patanjali. There is a growing hunger among thousands of yoga teachers and practitioners to dive into the inner dimension and deeper aspects of yoga. The popular practices of yoga have fulfilled society's need for physical fitness, weight loss, competition and relaxation and have made yoga a household word but it should not be limited to this. That is like clipping of the wings of an airplane and using it as a car. The great sages knew the power of yoga for the holistic and spiritual transformation of body-mind, heart and soul.

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## A FUSION OF HATHA AND RAJA YOGA

In 1970 Yogi Desai had an unexpected mystical experience. In his daily sadhana his disciplined deliberate practice of asanas took a paradoxical change and he found himself in a sudden flow of spontaneous, automatic movements in a deeply ecstatic meditative state, while his body performed unusual and unfamiliar postures. His body became extremely pliable and flexible for more than an hour. He was in bliss and into a dynamic stillness - meditation in motion. His postures were non-mentally guided by the inner promptings of prana - the early state of Kundalini awakening. This completely changed his life and his perspective on the practice of yoga.

*"In 1970-71, I had become well known in the field of yoga. I was the founder of one of the largest yoga organizations in America, conducting one hundred and fifty yoga classes a week, training approximately 2,000 students each semester. I was recognized with the honorary degree of Doctor of Yoga by HH Jagadguru Shankaracharya. Yet I realized that I did not know the real depth of yoga until it was revealed to me in that awakening experience in 1970."*

He discovered he could re-enter this experience in his daily practices. He realized the true meaning of practicing Patanjali's Ashtanga (Eight-Limbed Yoga) and that a sadhana of asana and meditation practiced separately was incomplete. This insightful understanding of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras was not merely a philosophy. Their true meaning and essence had been directly experienced. He has since integrated the core principles and values of Patanjali's Eight-Limbed Yoga into attainable practical techniques and tools that can help any student of Ashtanga Yoga enter a holistic practice. The emphasis from the very beginning is the development of inward focus and to remain witness to all modifications of the mind that manifest as mental and emotional reactions that occur in the practice of *yamas* and *niyamas*, *asana* and *pranayama*. As a result Yogi Desai created a radical new approach to the practice of yoga, *meditation in motion*, the simultaneous practice of Hatha and Raja yoga.



## PATANJALI YOGA SUTRAS: A HOLISTIC PRACTICE

Patanjali chose the word “Ashtanga” consciously, to describe the eight limbs of yoga that make up one body of yoga. The very name’s *astha* (eight) *anga* (limbs) denotes that it is not eight steps of yoga to be practiced one at a time in a linear way. The function of each limb of our body is complementary and in co-creation with all the other limbs serving the body as a whole. Each limb of Ashtanga Yoga has to be practiced holistically to continually evolve toward the ultimate experience of union called *Samadhi*, in which the individual soul merges with the cosmic soul. It is the experience of the union of Purusha and Prakriti; Shiva and Shakti, consciousness and energy.

**It Is Not A Step Ladder Approach of Climbing One Step At a Time and Reaching the Final Step of Samadhi.** Any one limb of eight-limbed yoga in the absence of the unifying power of “witness” becomes just a physical practice. Without “witness” you cannot enter what Patanjali describes as yoga. Yoga is witnessing the mental modifications of the ego-mind. It is a holistic practice. It engages all limbs on all levels through which consciousness manifests. A practitioner can cultivate anyone limb but its exclusive practice will be in conflict with the whole; it will not result in oneness. You cannot drop anyone step and enter into harmony and unity. *The eight-limbed body of yoga is the holistic practice of yoga that creates a quantum leap and profound shift that connects you to the source of oneness every moment, every step of the way, not just at the end of the journey at the stage of Samadhi.*

If you have an eight-stringed instrument and you tune the “Hatha yoga” strings and leave the “Raja” yoga strings untuned, no matter how accomplished a musician you are you will not get music from it. All eight strings must be in tune at the same time to get music. Only then does it become the music of the soul.

**Patanjali’s Yoga Sutras Holds the Secrets to the Purpose of Yoga: The Experience Of Integration.** Sanskrit scholars and philosophers have treated the teachings of Patanjali’s *Yoga Sutras* as scriptures rather than dynamic disciplines and techniques which are designed for yoga practitioners to embody the powerful inner dimension of yoga *experientially*. For a yogi it is a practical guide, a manual for their practice.

Patanjali states that the purpose of the practice of eight-limbed yoga is about remaining the witness to the modifications of mind. This means that the practice of eight-limbed yoga must be accompanied with the witnessing power of meditation from the very beginning. Thus, for Patanjali, entry into yoga happens in the non-mental integrative unifying zone of “now.” This he defines in his first sutra that says: “*Now the discipline of yoga.*” Thus, *Samadhi* is the unfolding process as the seed of integration is nurtured in the unfolding journey of a practicing yogi. It results in the flowering of the ultimate manifestation of *Samadhi*.

**Now, the Discipline of Yoga.** Entering the experience of ‘now’ is not a goal to be achieved in the future. It is not an external event, situation or experience to be created and achieved in the dimension of time. Instead it is a moment to moment process where you catch yourself in your mental and emotional reactions arising out of the pre-programmed body of your conditioned past. When you withdraw from the reactive thoughts and actions through choiceless, non-reactive awareness you have entered the omnipresent presence in the non-mental, timeless zone of *now*. This means you have entered the discipline of yoga.

Yoga is being in choiceless awareness, accepting what is, as it is with no need for you to control, manage, change or improve whatever you face from moment to moment. This frees you from reacting to whatever (physical, mental, and emotional blocks) you face. You will withdraw from the ego-mind getting caught in fight or flight reaction. Thus, his first two sutras are clearly explaining how to enter the inner dimension of yoga by remaining witness to all the passing thoughts, feelings, fears and emotional reactions, regardless of what limb of yoga you are engaged in. Your connection to the source takes only one step, choiceless awareness, and that Self cannot be accessed by ten thousand steps of the self-image.

Your soul is an omnipresent presence, the Self that you are. *Now* is the same as the Self that I AM. Every moment I step out of the time bound ego-mind, I Am reborn. Every experience shaped through my reactive perception is living through the nonexistent dead past. Reactively perceived events disappear upon awakening of the Self that I Am.

‘*Now the discipline of yoga*’ means “dying” to the ego-mind, the carrier of the dead memories of the past, and being born into the infinite source of power of the presence within. I AM, the soul in me, is an eternal choice-less witness to every object, relationship and situation it encounters from moment to moment. Thus, when I am in witness, life is experienced as a moment to moment birth and death, death of the time-bound ego-mind and birth of the timeless presence that I AM.



**The Integrative Amrit Method (I AM) of Yoga Is Designed to Provide the Master Key to Patanjali's Non-Linear Holistic Practice of Yoga.** When you learn to transition from the ego-mind as the achiever or performer to the subconscious being or *chitta* and *prana*, you enter a transformative process through meditation. In the practice of yoga, you want to create a paradigm shift from action originating from the time-bound ego-mind to be directly prompted from the innate wisdom of the body, your prana being. This was the direct experience of Yogi Desai through which he developed and designed his entire practice of eight-limbed yoga.

When you go *below* the mind, you move into the subconscious cosmic intelligence of the autonomic nervous system that is driven by the self-conscious ego-mind. Your pre-programmed self-image perceives the physical or emotional obstacles with a reactive choice for or against and reacts to what is present, creating more mental irritation. That choice comes from the ego-mind and disturbs the self-balancing, self-healing, restorative, regenerative, polarity-based innate wisdom of the prana body. We call it homeostasis.

Our mind and emotions that emerge from the body of our self-image are conditioned by the past and dominate our autonomic nervous system that acts only in response to what is present. This means every reaction to what is present that arises from the self-image activates the sympathetic nervous system. When one side of the autonomic nervous system is dominated through the rational, logical, left brain, both the intuitive right brain and parasympathetic nervous system becomes weaker and dysfunctional and unable to restore balance.

**Unresolved interactions with reality leave their distorted perceptions and impressions in the physical, mental and emotional bodies of self-image.** These mentally and emotionally induced conflicts feed the karmic body formed from all the traumas, pains and hurts that the soul experienced throughout its journey of many lifetimes. Such distorted impressions of reality live in the karma body as undigested, unresolved impurities and impressions of the past. These impurities in yoga are called *rajas* and *tamas*.

Yoga happens when you enter the *now*, through non-mental, meditative, choiceless awareness. Your practice of *yamas* and *niyamas*, *asanas* and *pranayama* is guided by integrative choiceless awareness. The reactive perceiver reacts to whatever stiffness, weaknesses or edge you face in your body or the fear of pain and hurt you experience in your mind. This is called your unconscious edge. You face a reactive edge in the *yamas* and *niyamas*, creating fear, guilt and self-rejection. This edge also appears during the practice of postures. If you become edgy on the edge, you are in a fight or flight reaction in your ego-mind.

*Witness is like fertilizer at the root of a tree and when action comes from witness and acceptance of what is as is, the fertilized sap nourishes and enlivens all of the trees branches, leaves .. flowers and fruits of the tree. The same can be said of our self-images thoughts, behaviors and concepts which are poisonous to the tree.*

**Each Limb of Eight-Limbed Yoga Represents a Different Level Where There Are Impurities Resulting From the Conditioned Past Manifesting As Mental Modifications.** *Yamas* and *niyamas* and all the limbs are about purification of body, mind, heart and soul. Impurities on all these levels, when removed through choiceless witness awareness in each stage of practice, progressively move you towards the deeper integration that will manifest into total integration, *Sa- madhi*. *Yamas* and *niyamas* can also be practiced unconsciously whenever you practice them as morally right and wrong behavioral patterns. When you are in a challenging situation and you feel frustrated, guilty and a failure; you are practicing violence against yourself. You are creating conflict against your failure to practice it. When you practice *vairagya* (non-attachment) to any end-result of action, it will prevent you from creating internal conflict.

**Patanjali Describes the Purpose of Yoga as Stilling the Mind.** The form of stillness Yogi Desai experienced in his original experience is the cornerstone of the practice of the Integrative Amrit Method of yoga. Those principles of Raja yoga: *pratyahara*, *pranayama*, concentration and meditation must be present at every stage of yoga and not just at the end. The practice of Hatha yoga combined with *pratyahara* and inward focused concentration can greatly enhance the meditative aspects of Raja yoga and vice versa. There are two levels at which you practice yoga postures:

1. The deliberate, external expression of physical form, alignments, press points and energetic extensions combined with;
2. *Pratyahara*, the internal withdrawal from the endless chatter and dialog of the mind through integrative intention, breath and meditative choice less awareness.

To enter a unified state of being, what you say, think, feel and do must be brought into complete alignment. Yoga is a meditation-based practice. You must have now, what you want in the future. Yoga is not so much skillful action as it is conscious action infused by choice less awareness that brings all levels of our body, mind, heart and soul into harmony, balance and unification. Choiceless awareness means "I do not choose for or against what is present. I witness or surren-



der the ego-mind.” Witness then opens the door to face and embrace the present as it is. Yoga is the experience of unification that happens beyond mind and time, the experience of I Am that I Am.

## ABHYASA AND VAIRAGYA

Also by “*constant practice with detachment (vairagya)(creates) the cessation of identification with mental activities*” (ch. 1 #12). Here, Patanjali prescribes the heart of the practice of *yamas* and *niyamas*, *asanas* and *pranayama*. The words “detachment to the end results” is significant. What exactly are you detaching from that produces cessation of mental modifications?

Constant practice (*Abhyasa*) refers to practice of (*pratyahara*) withdrawal from reactive “fight or flight” physical, mental and emotional reactions arising out of the unconscious body of self-image. When unconscious habits and behavioral patterns arise from the self-image you face on the edge; you get edgy and instantly get caught up into fight or flight reaction. This turns the unifying power of yoga postures into conflict-creative ego-postures.

### **Any Practice Done Through the Ego-mind Is For Seeking Relief and Freedom From External Physical Symptoms.**

When you practice through the non-doing power of integrative interaction with what is present, it allows you to return back to the Presence that you are, the I AM, the Soul within. Any doing as reaction to the edge that is present externally keeps you from the Presence within. This is what Patanjali calls “constant practice” and non-attachment to the end results, which is built into our practice of dynamic action, followed by deep relaxation that leads into dynamic stillness. It is a perpetual surrender to what is present and the Presence that I AM.

This form of alert awareness to the reactive edge of ego-mind turns into real self-study, self-observation.

Discriminative powers of higher mind (*Buddhi*) are cultivated with constant practice (*Abhyasa*). It purifies body, mind and heart. It develops *sattva guna*.

**Constant Practice Must be Accompanied by Detachment.** Patanjali says, “*constant practice with detachment creates cessation.*” Cessation of what? Your reactive thought-forms. It calms you down. By doing what? Constant practice. What practice do you do so that your mind goes into cessation? Constant practice won’t get you anywhere. Patanjali says it must be accompanied with detachment. Detachment from what? You must detach yourself from who you are not in that practice. So when you practice Amrit Yoga, notice it takes you to an edge, where you just stop and say, “Do I want to go any further, or do I want to withdraw?” Most people practice fight or flight reactions on the edge. It takes your practice into the ego-posture and you still call it a yoga posture. Yogi Desai says, “*I see this all over the world Everywhere I go I have seen nothing else. The edge turns into a battle ground; that battleground is all about the modifications of mind. That’s what Patanjali says you should not be doing in a yoga posture. That’s the whole purpose of doing the postures, “Yoga chitta vritti nirodhta.*”

### **Withdrawing From Unconscious Reactive Thoughts and Actions Creates a Shift From the Reactive Perceiver to the Non-Reactive Witness Consciousness (Prana Being).**

When you withdraw from mental modifications you simultaneously withdraw from your time-bound karma body. When you withdraw from the reactive perceiver, your fight or flight reaction turns into a responsive interaction. This allows you to turn back into a co-creative interaction between *chitta* and *prana*. Your mind is now in a responsive interaction with *prana*. Your postures and *pranayama* are converted from conflict-creating reactive action on the edge into a responsive co-creating interaction with your *prana* being.

### **Each Time You Disengage from the Subconscious Life Force Trapped in the Unconscious Self-Image You Remove a Fundamental Block Preventing You from Fully Entering the Yoga Posture.**

Now begins the discipline of yoga. As you remain the reactive-free observer on the edge in the practice of posture (or in interactions in life) the mental and emotional charge that overrides the free flow of *prana* can now totally be focused on the felt-presence of your *prana* being. The same thing happens when you practice, let’s say; non-violence. You are using non-violence as your intention. How long will it take before you become violent? When you are attached to the results of any action, you become frustrated, guilty and that is a violence against yourself.

That means, in the practice of *yamas* and *niyamas*, also there is an edge. How many times have you begun to practice the *yamas* and *niyamas* and noticed that immediately your edge shows up? Notice the edge and be the witness, but if you get edgy on the edge, you’ve lost the purpose of the practice. You have become the judge and are in your ego; your ego is hurt. The ego says, “I failed.” That means you’ve stepped out of the spiritual domain which was meant for the practice of *yamas* and *niyamas* and entered into the domain of the ego, rejecting yourself, calling yourself “sinner” and preparing to bum in hell forever and ever. This is because you are not practicing what Patanjali says “*remain in your inner practice with non-attachment to the end results*”.



*When Patanjali says that witnessing the modifications of mind is yoga, he means the witness initiates the process of withdrawing not only from the reactive modification of the mind but it is also withdrawing from the pre-programmed conditioned body from which it arises.*

## I AM YOGA IS A JOURNEY FROM THE SELF-IMAGE TO THE INTEGRATED AND UNDIVIDED SELF

Silence is omnipresent. Only when the mind is quiet from mental noise can it be aware of stillness. Inner silence represents outer silence. When you are practicing a posture and you come to an edge, you meet that edge with a fight or flight reaction. You want to push your way through it or back off and flee from it. This is a psychosomatic reaction represented by your unconscious, pre-programmed past. If you are alert on the edge, you will notice you are having a reaction and your muscles are engaged in defensive tightening and your mind is engaged in fearful, agitated thoughts. Behind the external posture is the invisible animating force of the ego-mind that analyzes, compares, competes and fears being hurt. Integrative Amrit Yoga cultivates razor-sharp alert, meditative, choiceless awareness to detect reactive impulses that arise from our pre-programmed ego-mind that is conditioned by the past. An intention for integration, not choosing for or against what is present, turns the ego-posture into a posture of consciousness.

**Asana Practice on the Yoga Mat is Designed to Bring Up All Your Unresolved Issues.** Your unresolved issues resurface as mental and emotional reactions that will distract you and claim your attention keeping you from focusing inward which is the heart and soul of yoga. Your karma body is the hidden cause that appears on the surface as stiffness, inflexibility, muscle tension, poor circulation, sleep disorders, anxiety and depression. When you face defensive stiffness in a posture, know that you are facing an edge. That edge is a symptom, an effect. The true cause is much deeper. You can fight and remove the defensive symptoms of stiffness however you cannot remove its cause - the defensive self-image that created it. That is like hiring a thief to be a policeman.

**In I AM Yoga, Pratyahara Creates the Shift from an Ego-Driven Practice to One of Meditative Choiceless Awareness.** The holistic practice of Amrit Yoga allows you to be deeply absorbed and totally engaged where thinking, feeling, doing and being enter a direct experience of oneness through choiceless witness awareness and an intention for integration. Choiceless awareness encourages you to return again and again to explore your practice more deeply. This practice of the inner dimension of yoga cultivates a shift from the physical body to the center of oneness within. Instead of focusing on how to perform a more complicated posture, the focus is on deepening a connection to integrative consciousness, progressively moving more fully into *dhyana* while in the pose. *Pratyahara* initiates a shift from the willful outward, physical form of *asana* to an inner experience of the non-mental spiritual dimension of Raja yoga.

**Pratyahara Creates a Shift From Judging Your Performance to Witnessing Your Edge.** This converts your fight or flight reaction into an integrative process of conscious response and choiceless meditative awareness to bring the light of consciousness to dissolve and erase your edgy reaction. The practice of *dharana* and *dhyana* are built into the practice of *asana*. The practice of yoga that quiets the mental modifications is non-doing witness. The question arises: if actions are withdrawn from being performed by the ego-mind, how then are the actions performed? This is the mystery of yoga. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, it is called "action less action", "dynamic stillness" or "meditation in motion." This is a paradoxical experience where opposites happen simultaneously.

In yoga, you consciously withdraw from identification with your thought forms; you are in choiceless, witness awareness, the detached observer. You are the choiceless witness of all thoughts that are coming and going. The pranic energy trapped in the body of the self-image is released to be in harmonious interaction with the *prana being* within.

**When You Combine Withdrawal of Ego-Mind with Witness, You Have Made a Paradigm Shift from Conflict-Creating Duality to the Co-Creative Polarity of Prana Being.** This allows you to enter into meditation in motion where all your actions arise directly from your *prana being*. The non-reactive power of witness consciousness disengages you from the conflict-creating, stress-producing separated body of the self-image and creates an opening for you to enter the ecstatic experience of oneness within. This posture of consciousness represents the active expression and receptive intention for integration. At a level of consciousness you are fulfilled and content with who you are, who you are with and what you are doing. You are integrated, undivided and whole.



**Breath: The Link Between Body and Mind, Asana and Pratyahara.** As the witness you withdraw through the medium of breath. Breath is the non-mental connection to the subconscious prana body. To learn to create this shift from the doer, ego-mind to the non-doing prana being, we must use *pranayama*, a powerful medium to further disengage from the ego-mind. It acts as a powerful tool of the super-conscious being that we are. Our subconscious prana becomes a powerful link to connect with the super-conscious being. When combined with the super-conscious being, you rise beyond the body-mind. The mind-dominated prana body progressively quiets down, You move beyond the ego-mind and enter the union of subconscious prana Shakti and super-conscious Being. It is the union of *Purusha* and *Prakriti*, *Shiva* and *Shakti*, the ultimate yoga.

## BEING “EDGY ON THE EDGE”

In the eight-limbed practice, *pratyahara* is the withdrawal from external disturbances and the five senses and is a preliminary stage to Raja yoga. You learn to stop disturbances arising from your immediate surroundings. When on the edge, *pratyahara* allows you to focus your attention more fully on *felt sensations* in the body where you can then remain witness to the sensations and more easily enter the energy/prana body. When you are witness to these sensations that arise on the edge, you constantly withdraw from *any feelings about what you are feeling in the body*. You withdraw from being “edgy on the edge”. You can shift from thinking and reactive doing into a non-reactive responsive interaction with the edge. You shift into the *feeling* prana body, the *feeling* presence of the subconscious prana being.

**Reaction Converts Feeling into Feelings.** To attain a steady focus on feeling what is present, or the felt-presence, you must remain the meditative witness. This allows you to observe the feeling in the body, and the feelings created as reactions in the mind. *Yamas* and *niyamas*, *asana* and *pranayama* cannot be truly practiced unless you learn how to use them as vehicles to create a paradigm shift from the conflict-creating ego-mind conditioned by the past to the unconditional power of Presence.

To enter the power of the omnipresent Presence that we are (God within), we must disengage from identification with the mind that manifests in the form of mental agitations when we face the edge, whether on the yoga mat or in life situations. Thus, you disengage from the subconscious life force trapped in your unconscious body of self-image. You free the life force/prana trapped in the karma body of your self-image and eliminate the fundamental block that manifests as symptoms on the surface in the form of physical, mental and emotional health problems.

Fight or flight reactions that arise in the form of an ego-posture can eliminate symptoms but it cannot eliminate the conflict that exists between unconscious patterns and the consciousness that I Am.

**Non-Reactive Presence Cultivated on the Yoga Mat Extends into All Aspects of Your Life.** Your reaction to your physical edge has a beginning and it has an end. This edge is a springboard from which you can leap into formless choiceless awareness. When you are right at your edge, where you usually and unconsciously react, you can deliberately and consciously interrupt the reaction with breath, and relax. Once you have relaxed, your rationalizing, logical left brain will become free from the pre-programmed, reactive thinking driven by charged emotions.

All fight or flight reaction is an ego posture. When you withdraw and practice *pratyahara*, you first relax at the edge and accept it. When you accept it, you withdraw from the self-image that identifies the edge as “me.” You withdraw the ego-mind as the doer and achiever that engages in success and failure and replace it with the non-doing power of the integrated being. All thoughts of fear, pain, competition, success and failure disappear. The non-reactive presence you cultivate on the yoga mat extends into an aspects of your life, family life, business life and love life.

**When the Body Is No Longer a Slave, It Becomes a Temple.** Outer work addresses surface symptoms. Inner work addresses the unconscious cause of the symptoms through connecting to source. Source is Spirit. It is like the roots of a tree. When the roots are nourished, the sap of life reaches every branch, leaf, flower and fruit. So also when you enter the “stress-free yoga zone,” you nourish, energize and heal the body, mind, heart and soul.

Integrating inner work on a soul level with the practice of postures leads to the embodiment of the Spirit. The body is no longer a slave serving the ego-mind but a temple for the divine to manifest. In Amrit Yoga we practice what we call the *second half of the pose*, where you become still, feeling the energetic impact and listening to the wisdom of the energy body. Prana (vital life energy) returns you to your Presence. This is the leap from ego-posture to the Posture of Consciousness.



**Our Only Problem in Life Is Reaction to Reality.** Many people feel an inner urging to make a dramatic change in their lives. They are sick and tired of being sick and tired. They want to get out of their thoughts and be totally present, to live fully and fulfill their true potential. In their heart of hearts they want to make the leap; they just don't know how. They try to rationalize their way into leaping but this cannot be done. Leaping takes courage. What is courage? Courage is a complete letting-go of the reactive mind you are attached to. Once you let that go, you fly wholeheartedly into the here and now. Real transformation can happen only in the present moment. When you are living your life from reaction, you are repeating the past and resisting whatever is present. This is how most humans operate. Instead of living freely in the present, they are imprisoned, continuously re-living the past.

Your body and mind act as a storage tank containing all your past reactions that you continually repeat in the present. This is the prison you have built for yourself. In order to make a quantum leap, you must practice *pratyahara*, which means withdrawing from your self-created, self-victimizing reactive thoughts and emotions. You cannot break out of the prison using the same reactive mind that constructed it. It is like taking your handcuffs and placing them on your ankles. You cannot leap like this. All you do is continue falling on your face.

**You Cannot Make a Leap through Linear Logical Thinking Because It Came from the Same Mind that Created Your Logic and Reaction in the First Place.** The leap cannot happen through the popular malpractice of yoga that focuses exclusively on the physical postures. While this limited approach might address the symptoms of reactive programming, you need an integrative, meditative practice to address the root cause of the reactive patterning. Only then can a transformative leap occur. If you don't pluck the weed with its root, the weed grows back. What is the weed? It is the past repeating itself in the present. In order to withdraw from your reactive mind, you must create space between the reactive thoughts with which you have misidentified yourself and the Presence who observes the thoughts.

**What You Want in the End Must Be Present In the Beginning and All Along the Way.** In any form of spiritual discipline, what you want in the end must be present in seed form in the beginning. If you want to harvest mangos, you must plant the seed of a mango. If you are practicing yoga with unity as its ultimate purpose, you need to plant the seed of unity and let the entire process of the spiritual unfoldment of yoga be nurtured by unity consciousness until you reach the state of *Samadhi*. This means that even the preparatory, physical practice of *asanas* must be accompanied by the seed of witness consciousness in order for us to experience the integration of body, mind and spirit.

The Integrative Amrit Method of Yoga is designed in such a way that from the very first step of learning to practice Hatha Yoga asanas, to the final experience of Meditation in Motion, the deepening of integration happens throughout the entire journey, not just at the end.

**The Inner Dimension of Yoga Can Take You Further and Deeper with Less Effort and More Ease Than Ever Before.** This inner dimension means *releasing pranic* intelligence from the domination of the ego-mind. To achieve this, *first*, disengage from your ego-mind's reactions when you face the edge. *Second*, remain the choiceless witness to thoughts and emotions that rise out of your self-image. This allows you to create an opening to the super-conscious choiceless awareness, to be the witness, the observer. If you react on the edge with the ego-mind, you are reacting to the creations of the ego-mind. It is like fighting fire with gasoline.

When the mind, imposed on by the ego is released, "I am not my thoughts; I am the witness," you are no longer identified with emotional reaction. This is where real *pratyahara* happens. This is where you enter the integrative, unifying inner dimension of witness. It is the "surrender" of the ego-mind. Witness allows you to move beyond the time-bound body, mind and ego. It allows you to rise out of the conflict-creating, stress-producing mental and emotional agitation and move into the silent witness. This progressively allows you to enter the super-conscious dimension, freed from identification with the ego-mind.

**Intention for Integration Is Essential to the Practice of the Integrative Amrit Method (I AM) of Yoga.** The meaning of the word yoga and the purpose of the practice of yoga is to experience integration - the oneness of body, mind and spirit. When you practice Hatha Yoga postures, there is no way to truly separate the mental component of the practice from the physical. Every act in the physical practice of a yoga posture is invariably accompanied and strongly influenced by our mental and emotional conditions, which form the internal, more subtle aspect of the yoga practice. Therefore, internal awareness has a very real and profound impact on the postures we are performing. No spiritual discipline can be complete without the internal and subtle component.

**In I AM Yoga, the Body is a Sacred Vehicle to Connects You to Your True Presence.** The witness to the reaction is not the one who is reacting; it is the formless Presence that you are at your essence. A space has been created, and then you can take the quantum leap. Space is necessary to take the leap. It is like Hanuman leaping over the ocean. Without



the ocean, there is nothing to reach for. When we accompany the Hatha Yoga postures with the enormous powers of mental focus and meditative witness consciousness, the practice offers us higher possibilities than we could expect from an isolated physical discipline. Not only that, but in the final stage, Amrit Yoga incorporates *asana* (posture), *pranayama* (breath and life-force control), *pratyahara* (internalizing the outgoing attention), *dharana* (concentration), and *dhyana* (meditation). Only such a practice that integrates body, mind and spirit is a holistic practice. If the practice of postures is not holistic, it is not integrative *and it is not yoga*.

Since the ultimate purpose of the practice of yoga is *Samadhi*, we must practice in such a way that our intention is to remove any sense of separation from our authentic source of power within (experienced as conflict, self-doubt, fear, blame, shame or guilt). The elimination of a sense of alienation from the Self is an integral part of each stage of the holistic practice of yoga from the very first step.

**Unification Is the Ultimate Fruit of Patanjali's Eight-Limbed Tree.** In its earlier stages, how do you perform yoga postures so that they progressively unfold into the ultimate experience of integration? Amrit Yoga uses integrative intention from the very beginning of the practice of *vamas* and *niyamas* and *asanas*. Thus, the outer practice of physical postures is infused with the inner practice of integrative action. Amrit Yoga uses outer form that progressively nurtures the inner seed of integration. This happens because the outer limbs of the tree are growing through the life force prana, acting as a nourishing sap feeding the tree so that it grows fully and bears the fruit of *Samadhi*.

### THE INTEGRATIVE AMRIT METHOD (I AM).

Those who practice the Integrative Amrit Methods, (I AM), as developed by Gurudev, can experience the spontaneous, transformative power of "I AM" within. Returning back to the Source you experience "I AM THAT I AM." These "I AM" techniques are powerful tools that instantly and effortlessly connect you to the inner most core of your Being. This is where all the healing miracles happen through the synergistic merging of the Presence that you carry within.

Gurudev refined the core principles of Kripalu Yoga into the Integrative Amrit Method (I AM)\*, an innovative, experiential and synergistic system that allows practitioners to use the challenges of modern life as opportunities to awaken consciousness. Amrit Method practices enable even the novice student to experience the deepest levels of tranquility and stillness and enter into harmony with whatever life brings. Kripalu and the Integrative Amrit Method practices are now taught by more than 5,000 certified teachers in 40 countries.

Gurudev has authored many books, articles, and essays and continues to teach today, constantly developing his approach to make these practices easily accessible for the benefit of all. It is a rare and special privilege to study with a living yoga master, to be so close to the source of this powerful lineage of Shaktipat Kundalini Yoga, and to perpetuate its potential through our own sadhana and service.

Gurudev's unique contribution to the yoga community in the West has been his work of restoring the authentic practice of Patanjali's classical Ashtanga or "Eight-Limbed Yoga." He brought its hidden, core principles and secrets of Kundalini or Tantra Yoga and built them into a holistic practice of "Eight-Limbed Yoga". The body of "Eight-Limbed Yoga" is represented in the Amrit Methods of Yoga, Yoga Nidra and Quantum Breath Meditation as the combined practice of Hatha and Raja Yoga creating a holistic practice. These concepts have been published as Amrit Yoga: Explore, Expand and Experience the Spiritual Depth of Yoga and earlier as Kripalu Yoga, "Meditation-in-Motion." These writings have completely changed the popular notion of "Eight-Limbed Yoga" as a "step by step linear practice" to one of integration of physical, mental and spiritual disciplines missing in the practice of yoga today.

### Biography

Gurudev Shri Amritji (Yogi Amrit Desai) is one of a handful of gurus who came to America from India in the early 1960s. This wave began the initial Yoga craze that has grown into the massive and diverse Yoga practices we have worldwide today. Amritji has been repeatedly honored for being one of the earliest pioneers to play a significant role in bringing yoga to the west. He is the last living guru from this initial wave.

The ancient spiritual teachings of India were first introduced in the West by H. H. Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902), followed by another prominent spiritual master, H. H. Paramahansa Yogananda (1893-1952). Amritji arrived in North America eight years after Yogananda's passing.

Following in the footsteps of the earlier great yogis, reaching out to millions worldwide, Amritji has played a key role in recapturing and restoring the profound power of the authentic teachings of Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga and Yoga Sutras. Since the time of his arrival in the U.S. in February 1960 until today, he has made a significant impact in transforming the history



of yoga in the Western world. He is recognized as one of the greatest emissaries of India's ancient yogic heritage.

In recognition of the global impact in the field yoga, he was honored in 2013 with the ***International Yoga Grand Master*** award, conferred by Padma Shri H.H. Jagat Guru Amrita Suryananda Maharaj. This award has only been previously awarded only to Padma Shri Dr. Nagendra of SVYASA University, Bangalore and B.K.S Iyengar.

Homegrown Gurus published by State University of New York, 2013: "... (sic) Desai remains at the forefront of the modern Anglophone (English-speaking) Yoga Revolution in America for almost four decades, with a growing international reputation. He also exports his teaching of Kripalu Yoga through personal demonstrations, talks and teacher training programs to more than 40 countries and acquires thousands of worldwide adherents. Desai's most noted innovation is that he was the first Indian-born ancient "American Yogi" to introduce systematic teachings and techniques on prana in the U.S."

Amritji's 1970 Kundalini awakening experience revealed to him that Patanjali's Yoga Sutras is a manual for the practice of Ashtanga Yoga rather than a philosophy of Yoga. Out of this realization, he designed a practice of Yoga that integrates the core principles of the Yoga Sutras into the practice of Ashtanga Yoga, a combined practice of Hatha and Raja Yoga.

Deepak Chopra said, "Yogi Amrit Desai is a pioneer in introducing Yoga to the West, but more significantly through his unique style, his method of teaching draws upon the original spiritual depth that is missing in the popular practice of Hatha Yoga."

### **Lord Lakulish and Kripalu Lineage**

Amritji is the carrier of the Lord Lakulish and Kripalu Shaktipat lineage to the West. He was one of the few disciples to be entrusted with the deepest secrets of the lineage. He received not only Shaktipat diksha from his guru, H.H. Swami Sri Kripalvanandji, but also the rare blessing to give Shaktipat to his disciples in the West.

Dr. David Frawley, (Padma Bushan) stated, "Yogi Desai revived the ancient teachings of the millennial old Shaivite Yoga, rooted in the Lakulish tradition from Kayavarohan in Gujarat, one of the greatest centers of India's older Yoga practices... Yogi Desai made these secret teachings once more alive and relevant to the entire world. He has left an indelible influence on modern Yoga, particularly in the West... Yogi Desai has demonstrated a Prana Siddhi in which he can allow the Universal Prana to move not only through his mind and body but also through his environment and into the audience around him, awakening their own inner prana and spiritual intelligence."

On Dec. 10, 1992, the late Prime Minister of India Chandra Shekhar wrote to India's then Prime Minister Shri Narasimha Rao: "Shri Amritji is an internationally renowned authority in the field of Yoga and exponent of the spiritual heritage for more than 30 years. He has dedicated his life not only to the in depth study and practice of Yoga but to spreading the ancient wisdom of India and its universal teachings throughout the world. Through his efforts, the Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health in Lenox, MA, USA, has grown fast and has received increased response from people around the world. In fact, I visited the center when I was in the USA and was deeply impressed by the dedication of the Yogacharya... I feel that Yogacharya Amritji deserves the honor for his work and therefore, recommend "Padma Vibhushan" for him as a special case." This request received a positive response from Prime Minister Rao.

### **The Rapid Progression of Amritji's Life Work**

Gurudev Shri Amritji started teaching Yoga in the early 1960s in the Philadelphia area. In the late 60's he formed The Yoga Society of Pennsylvania. With the impact of his genuine in-depth spiritual teachings, his popularity attracted the media as well as large numbers of people to his lectures. He was repeatedly interviewed by newspapers and invited to appear as a guest on radio and television programs. During this time, he traveled and lectured widely, with invitations from all over the U.S., Canada and Europe spreading his innovative approach to audiences hungry for his unique style of Yoga and meditation.

***The New York Times***, April 1987. "As Yogi Desai interacted with each person, it was not what he said that convinced me to trust him as a teacher. It was instead his presence...this combination of radiant energy and responding to each person with a respect, kindness and love that I had never seen before in any human being..."

### **As his teachings rapidly expanded, more facilities were created to accommodate the growing demand.**

In 1966, the not-for-profit Yoga Society of Pennsylvania grew to 150 Yoga classes attended by more than 2,500 students per week, making it one of the largest Yoga organizations at that time. It created a tremendous following, requiring more in depth teacher trainings for the growing demand.

In 1972, the first Kripalu Ashram was created in Sumneytown, PA, to fulfill the growing need. The ashram became a program center. It provided the residential staff and teachers the in depth study and practice of yoga, as well as a yogic lifestyle. As the attendance for programs grew, the residential staff grew to 70. In 1976, the new ashram in Summit Station, PA, was opened to accommodate the growth of the program participants and residential staff, offering a variety of health, yoga and spiritual trainings and programs. As a result, the residential staff grew to 150.



In 1983, he founded the Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health in Lenox, MA. The staff of Summit Station was transferred to Lenox, as the growth of programs and participation more than doubled. The residential staff grew to 350. Kripalu is presently one of the largest Yoga and health centers in North America, offering a wide range of programs and professional trainings in health, spirituality, yoga, and more.

**USA Today**, November 9, 1988: "Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health was included as one of the five finest health centers in America. It is among the most prestigious facilities in the country, such as the Charleston Retreat, The Golden Door and Canyon Ranch. Kripalu Center is by far the most economical and available of them all."

**The New York Times**, Sunday, April 7, 1991, reported: "The Kripalu Center is a Yoga and meditation center that draws people seeking a more spiritual life...Kripalu is not a place that exists solely for the comfort of the visitors. It is a community of people who are seeking a spiritual path as followers of Yogi Amrit Desai while living at the Center."

Starting in 1966 and over the next 50 years, Amritji's main focus has been to provide in depth spiritual teachings and the practice of authentic Yoga for the core residential staff of the five Yoga and health centers he has founded. This has made the core staff uniquely qualified to train the teachers to deliver the inner dimension of Yoga at the teacher training programs. By 1994 Yoga teachers were teaching in 52 states and 45 countries, and through affiliated networking, these teachings were reaching millions worldwide.

**Smithsonian Publications (2014), *Yoga: The Art of Transformation***, page 100: "The sixties brought an infusion of Indian gurus to the U.S., including Swami Muktananda...and Amrit Desai (b. 1932), who established the Yoga Society of Pennsylvania and Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health, named for his guru, Swami Kripalvanandji."

Today, more than 8,000 Yoga and Yoga Nidra teachers have been certified in the systems he developed. These teachers reach millions in more than 45 countries around the globe, including many European countries as well as China, Japan, Russia, Australia, Iceland and Canada.

**State University of New York (2013), *Homegrown Gurus***, "Although Desai has not received scholarly attention, he has arguably been one of the most influential and sought-after figures in the development of Hatha Yoga in America over the last 40 years. The Kripalu Yoga Center was an innovative vehicle whereby he could transmit his charismatic leadership."

After his 1994 departure from the Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health, Amritji resumed teaching in 1996 at the original Kripalu Ashram in Sumneytown, PA. He refined his teachings into what is now known as The Integrative Amrit Method, I AM Yoga. It includes Amrit Yoga, Yoga Nidra, Quantum Breath Meditation and Yoga Therapy.

**Amrit Yoga Institute (AYI)**, Salt Springs, Florida, was founded by Amritji in 2001. The thriving yoga ashram and program center offers professional trainings in yoga, yoga nidra, yoga therapy, and Quantum Breath meditation, as well as a wide range of health and spirituality related of programs. The Amrit Yoga Institute is an experiential learning center dedicated to the ancient Yogic tradition of uncovering the truths and mysteries of life through study, practice, service, and direct perception. The Amrit Yoga Institute is set in the tranquil beauty of the Ocala National Forest, on the shores of spring-fed Lake Kerr. Our serene, secluded 6-acre property nestles beneath a towering canopy of live oaks, lush gardens, Chattahoochee stone decks and walkways, and marvelous handcrafted woodwork inside our buildings provide a restful, natural setting that is ideal for restoring health and reconnecting to Source.

In 2014, Amritji co-founded the International University of Yoga and Ayurveda, which offers in-depth coursework and certification for Ayurvedic Practitioners, as well as Panchakarma detoxification programs on the AYI campus.

## The Amrit Yoga Institute



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[www.YogiAmritDesai.com](http://www.YogiAmritDesai.com)

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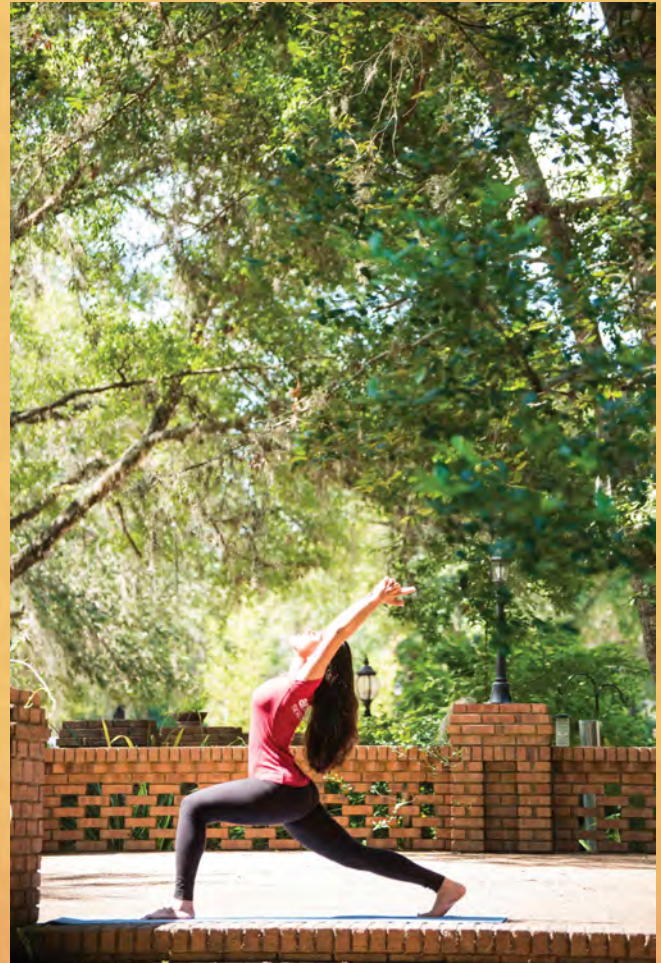
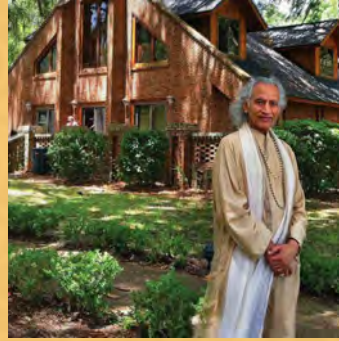
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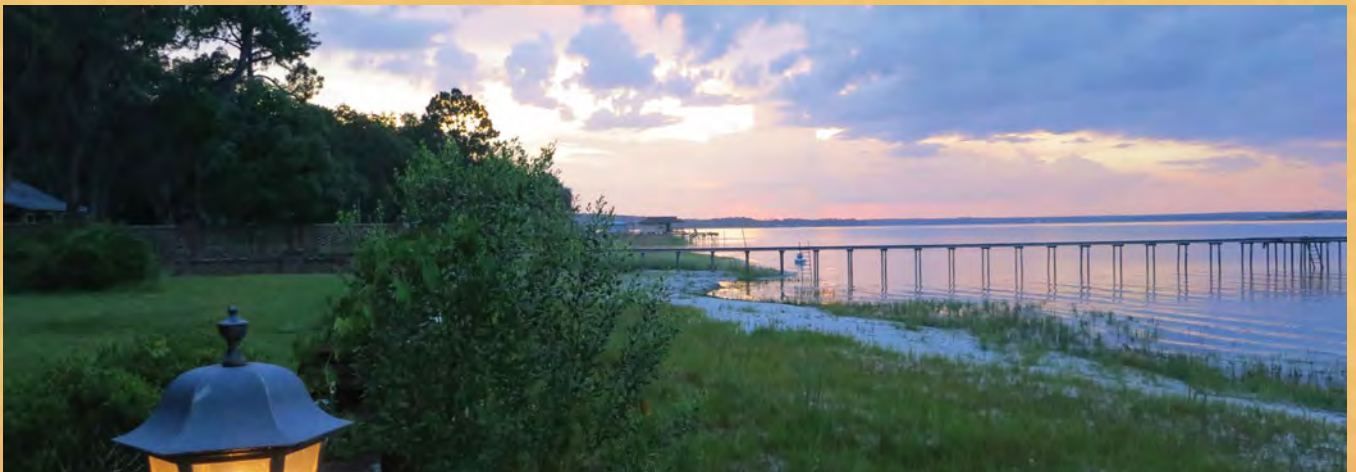
# *The Amrit Yoga Institute*















After 60 years of teaching in the West, Amritji resides at the Amrit Yoga Institute in Salt Springs, Florida.

He also founded the Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health, the largest in North America.

Today, there are more than 8,000 yoga and Yoga Nidra teachers trained in his I AM yoga system, teaching in more than 45 countries around the world.

The Amrit Ayurveda and Wellness Center offers programs in I AM yoga teacher and Yoga Nidra Professional trainings, as well as Ayurvedic Lifestyle and Consultant trainings.

Located in the Ocala National Forest on pristine Lake Kerr, the Institute is a sanctuary where seekers can immerse themselves in a supportive environment and emerge enriched and transformed.

