



HEART to HEART

Consciousness speaking to Consciousness

Vol. 29 No. 11

The Association of Happiness for All Mankind

August 2008



*Celebrating
30
Years
of
Awakening
to
Who
You
Really
Are*



AHAM is What You See it To Be

By A. Ramana from *Consciousness Being Itself* pp. 243-246

Elizabeth: I've felt a lot of times when an idea would come up in me, you would go "Um Hmm. Yes! I can feel that possibility." You would just be like an open space for it to come about and *then* we would begin to gently pull it apart and look at it. I felt that same thing when you first shared with me about the Association of Happiness. I felt "Hmm. Yeh! That's it! It's done!"

Ramana: Yes. That's *exactly* how AHAM came to be what is. If it were not for that very process going on, could it even be here? I mean, what is it? It is only an idea in manifestation. It's a perception and it is, to each one of us, the idea of what we perceive it to be. We could not be perceiving it to be, unless the idea of it was active within us, unless we were not ourselves touching it, feeling it, or turning on and sustaining the idea ourselves, within ourselves.

And, that is *all* that we have hold of. It is our very idea of it. AHAM is to each one of us what we have hold of in the mind, or in consciousness, and what we have hold of is what we see it to be – that's the only way it is, to each of us. That's redundant, but the statement made the full circle, I think. Do we see this?

Actually AHAM is what *you* see it to be, and *much much more*; but all that it is to *you* is what *you* see it to be. That doesn't mean that you are limited, or that it is limited because you see it to be what you see it to be. But yes, it may possibly be limiting, if the concept you have of it will not allow for or give room to some one else's concept as well, or will not allow it to be even greater than your own held concept of it.

Then you are limiting it, because you won't allow someone else's idea in, or won't concede to it expanding or growing beyond your present, limited concept.

Do you get what I'm saying here? Then it can get to the point when we say, "No, I don't want to see AHAM being that way!" Someone says, "I see it this way," and you say, "No, I don't see it that way, I see it this way," and someone else says, "No! I think you're both wrong. I see it this way." Then there is the danger that we no longer have a context. Differences of outlook, or vision, as to what AHAM is or should be, is OK as long as everyone is in agreement with the original context, the basic context, that it BE, and that it continues to BE, and that it maintain its initial purity of intention and purpose regardless of its change or form or manner of expression.

Elizabeth: A long time ago, didn't we all write that out? Some people saw AHAM as being housed in some big high-

rise building, like in the middle of downtown Greensboro, like a big business – and other people saw us more like we are now, with a retreat in the woods, and some saw it located by the ocean. We had all kinds of different ideas about it.



Ramana: Yes, we ended up out here in the woods. But, the main thing was that we *did* have a unified purpose and ideal, even if not the final form of the idea. We did agree that it exist, regardless of its form. And by coming together and sharing it, we shared at least the spirit of it, if not the form. And by sharing the spirit and holding collectively the spirit, the form has and will continue to take care of itself.

Yet, to what degree we *can* see the final form, if we utilize *all* the senses in holding it, then we are bringing in all the elements of manifestation. So, we can utilize the visionary form, by bringing that in. In other words, there comes a time for the form to be defined, as I was mentioning a while ago about the new bathhouse.

Participant: As two rooms!

Ramana: Well, as two rooms, or more if you count the training room and other area to later be the kitchen. But, we must begin somewhere in forming the final idea, formally bringing the final idea about, or into manifestation.

The first step to formally bringing it into manifestation, or giving it form, is to draw up a floor plan in order to visually see it; then from that floor plan it will happen. Just like this house. Some builder or architect must have drawn up a general plan, a floor plan, and outside elevations, etc., and all of that together made up what later came to be this house. It is a very well built building. That is why we purchased it, that and the land itself, with the lake.

The same way with the idea of a new bathhouse – it's an idea that is coming into manifestation. And the *idea* is first cause, *not* the money.

(Continued on next page)

Yes, money does become a secondary cause, but money is first an effect that rises up out of the original idea that gives rise to the other creative ideas that generate creative energy, putting it into motion, into action, into form.

Actually, money is energy – it is creative energy in money form. It is Consciousness in money form. That's what money *really* is, it's Consciousness in money form.

Everything is Consciousness. Consciousness both holds and *is* the context. In Consciousness we hold the context; Consciousness holds the idea or context within itself, and the idea itself is Consciousness. What does Consciousness hold within Itself?

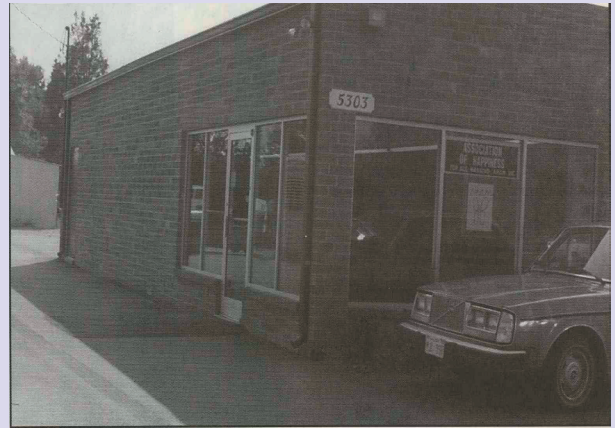
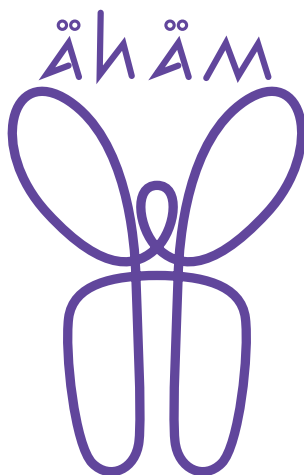
Response: The context.

Ramana: Yes, the context; and that's Consciousness. So Consciousness holds Consciousness in Consciousness, do you see? Or God holds God in God. It's all the same thing. Why can we actually "do" this? Why can we bring all this about, or accomplish this? Why is it that we have the ability to cause an idea to become manifest, or why are we able to succeed in creating in Consciousness, or playing with or molding Consciousness in manifestation, or playing with creativity? That's what it is, isn't it? Aren't we simply playing with manifestation? Who is it that creates that way?

Response: God.

Ramana: Yes. I AM, or God. We are able to accomplish this because in Truth *we are* the Supreme Being. We are God bringing about all that we are perceiving.

Yes, we do have the right, the ability, to do this, but also watch out! As I've said before, I don't intentionally or even inadvertently play this game this way, any more. If it does come up, as we're talking about it here, or something happens, if it comes up that something needs to be accomplished, or it looks like we might be getting a little behind on something that is needed, then I may hold the thought and feeling, the "end-of-the-movie" vision, "Well, let's let it come through now." ♥



Greensboro, NC Bookstore Early Days



AHAM Center, Asheboro, NC



AHAM India Ashram, Tiruvanmalai, S. India

*30 Years of
Serving Mankind*

What is AHAM Really?

By Elizabeth MacDonald, AHAM's Assistant Spiritual Director and Senior Trainer



Thirty years ago I met Ramana at my very first spiritual gathering. My journey of Self-discovery had just started and, interestingly enough, ended that week. This active mind was brought into the Stillness and Peace of the Heart, in my first encounter with Self-Inquiry, during our first meeting. The Grace that was present in this first meeting continues to this day, as AHAM came into manifestation and the Self-Inquiry practice became a moment-to-moment remembrance of who-I-really-am. Serving AHAM has turned out to be my life's work and I have enjoyed every moment of it. Yes, it has taken every ounce of my attention over these thirty years, but at the same time it has also been the "grist for the mill" ultimately bringing about a lightness of Being. I am so grateful for this Grace-full opportunity!

Just recently a question came up about the name "AHAM" and what is its true meaning. Little did I know that the answer to this question actually revealed the activating element in the transformational process available in AHAM itself.

I wrote my dear friend Ganesan (who is the grand-nephew of Bhagavan) and asked him this question, "What is the true meaning of AHAM?" This was his response:

"I AM" is the intrinsic meaning of AHAM. It also refers to the "I"-sense. There lies the beauty of Truth! In all languages – at least a few that I know of – the sacred syllable "I" invariably represents both "I AM" [the SELF] and also its variation the "T"-sense [the mind]. Only from Self, the mind sprouts; and also, gets merged finally."

Ramana has shared, "the name of a thing denotes the very nature of that thing." The conscious transformational process that is awakened in AHAM is imbued by and reflected in the very name itself. As Self-Inquiry is practiced, the "I"-sense (the mind, the separate-self identity) is withdrawn into the Source, into the Stillness and Peace of the Heart and the Pure I AM ... THAT I AM ... (the Self) is awakened in Awareness, as Awareness, as That Which Is Seeing this "I"-sense in all of its many forms. From this perspective of being the Awareness that is aware of what is coming and going, we are living free from the effects of the dynamics and dramas of this world. The purpose of AHAM: "Awakening into the Truth of Who-I-Really-Am" ultimately translates into an "association of happiness for all mankind."

What an awesome purpose to be aligned with for thirty years! I am overflowing with gratitude for Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, who discovered the Self-Inquiry process in his own awakening, and for A. Ramana for following his Guidance and bringing AHAM into being, and for all of those who have contributed to the manifestation of AHAM's mission and purpose over these thirty years whose names are too many to mention. I would also like to thank all of those who are now reaching out into uncharted territory and bringing their awakening into ordinary life. It is one thing to awaken and be living in a monastery somewhere away from life and it is quite another thing to awaken and live an active lifestyle fully embracing life with Love, Compassion, and Kindness. Acknowledgement and gratitude goes out to those who are courageously making a difference wherever they are, fully expressing their God given talents and skills from the very core of Being.

YES!! It is no longer AHAM as an organization, but AHAM as an active purpose that is the vibrant aliveness living us and directing us now... in every moment of NOW. ♥

HAPPY BIRTHDAY AHAM ... IN AND AS US ALL!!



♥ Self-Inquiry Instruction at AHAM ♥

June, 2008 Intensive Self-Inquiry Training Graduates

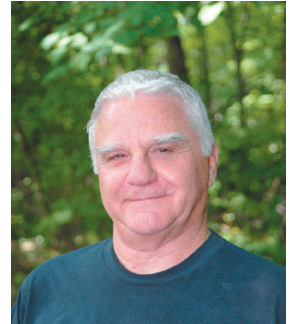


"I am experiencing a deeper sense of freedom and peace. I really got what Awareness is and how to use Self-Inquiry to stay in the Awareness."

– R.K., Middleton, ID

"What I received was far more than I could have ever dreamed. I was given a 'tool' (Self-Inquiry) that will sustain me in any and all life situations."

– T. W., Los Angeles, CA



"I am experiencing gratitude for myself, Ramana, and the AHAM staff. I feel so blessed to have been drawn to Bhagavan and His teaching. This experience has opened a door for me that I could not have conceived of before."

–K.S., Yarmouth, ME



"I see the usefulness of Self-Inquiry in all spheres of my life, especially at work. I feel lighter and calm and excited about working the Self-Inquiry Process."

– S.P., Roanoke, VA

"Right now I am experiencing clarity and being fully present in this moment of Now. I appreciate the simplicity of the process. There is a connectedness and affection for my fellow participants."

– W.H., Ft. Lauderdale, FL



Upcoming Intensive Self-Inquiry Retreat/Training: November 8-16, 2008. Registration cut-off is 30 days prior to program. Call the AHAM Center at 336-381-3988 or email <ahamcntr@asheboro.com> to register or for more information.



A Graduate Shares



The Intensive Self-Inquiry Training was indeed transformational for me. I've had a life with excruciatingly difficult periods and, more recently, years of comfort, ease and happiness. Yet I continued to have a sense of not knowing my "true self," a sense that I could be more than I was – both for myself and for my family. AHAM has led me to realize that, indeed, there is more than what appeared to exist in my life when I arrived for the training. The AHAM trainers, with superlative skill and tender love, led me to the silent, still state within, where I am totally safe and able to receive and use the guidance of Universal Intelligence. Some might see this as the ability to "let go and let God," but for me it is being at One with the creative Source of the universe or the spiritual Heart.

The Continued Practice that followed the Intensive Self-Inquiry Training helped me maintain the motivation and discipline instilled during the training. The reading material deepened my understanding of, and ability to practice, what I learned during the training. This five-week period has resulted in my increasing ability to function much of the time from the Heart rather than unconsciously be driven by my busy mind and ego. When challenges arise during the day, I'm able to use Self-Inquiry to return to the Heart. For this transformation of my daily existence I will be forever grateful to AHAM and all the members of the AHAM Family who helped me attain this way of living – "Conscious Living."

The weekly Buddy calls with Charlotte, as well as her willingness to be available at other times if needed, provided both a source of wisdom and a safety-net as I ventured further along the path of Conscious Living. Charlotte's role modeling as someone living and speaking from the Heart has been inspiring. Her answers to questions helped smooth out the bumps along the way, and her response to any doubts I had immediately clarified the source of the doubts and led to their disappearance. What a marvelous gift! ♥

Namasté,

M. E.,
Chapel Hill, NC





Benediction

From *Direct Teachings of Bhagavan Ramana* by V. Ganesan, pp. 144-146

The Self, the Truth is that which ever 'IS' – it is ever the "Real." Therefore, there is no need for 'realizing' the Self nor make it into a "Reality," says Sri Bhagavan. He adds that the seeker, however, has the responsibility to do the act of 'unrealizing' the 'non-Real' through the *sadhana* (spiritual practice) of Self-Inquiry. Everything external to oneself is non-Real – as proved in deep sleep – yet, one's mind constantly externalizes one's attention outward, thus landing one in doubt, uncertainty and pain. On the other hand, withdrawing the mind from 'attention-external' and introverting it to 'attention-internal' lands one in the lap of peace, quietude and contentment (as in deep sleep). Hence, it is very clear that any movement focused inward merges one in the Movement-less Reality.

How is one to effect this movement? Sri Bhagavan commands: "*Hrdi Visa*" – "Enter into the Heart." It is Bhagavan Ramana who 'discovered,' as it were, that the Spiritual Heart is the Self itself and it is on the right side of the chest.*

This manifestation of the Self in the form of 'I,' is direct and immediate, to all. It does not need any form of proof or verification. Adi Sankara wrote in a verse: "It is this 'I' which is immediately and directly experienced in the region of the Heart, by all." Thus, '*Atma Vidya*' (Self-Inquiry) merges one in '*Hridaya Vidya*' (Self-Knowledge) – the mind dissolving into the core of the Heart. Sri Bhagavan says " '*Hrit + Ayam*' = this [is] the Center (*Hridayam* = Heart). That is, it is the Center where from the mind rises and subsides. That [Heart] is the seat of Realization." The following passage from *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi* (Talk No. 97) elucidates this, very clearly:

One Mr. Ramachandar, a gentleman from Ambala, asked where the Heart is and what Realization is.

Sri Bhagavan: The Heart is not physical; it is spiritual. '*Hridayam*' – '*hrit*' + '*ayam*' – 'This is the Center.' It's that from which thoughts arise, on which they subsist and where they are resolved. The thoughts are the content of the mind and, they shape the universe. The Heart is the Center of all. '*Yatova imani bhutani ayante*' (that from which these beings come into existence) etc., is said to be 'Brahman; in the *Upanishads*. That is the Heart. 'Brahman' is the Heart.

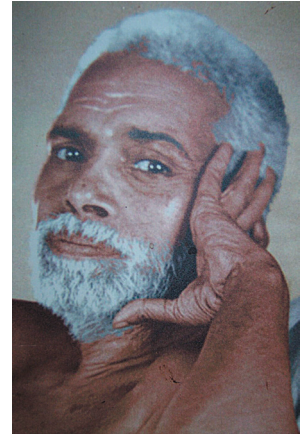


Devotee: How to realize it?

Sri Bhagavan: There is no one who even for a trice fails to experience the Self. For no one admits that he ever stands apart from the Self. He is the Self. The Self is the Heart.

Devotee: It is not clear.

Sri Bhagavan: In deep sleep you exist; awake, you remain. The same Self is in both states. The difference is only in the awareness and the non-awareness of the world. The world rises with the mind and sets with the mind. That which rises and sets is not the Self. The Self is different, giving rise to the mind, sustaining it and resolving it. So, the Self is the underlying principle. When asked who you are, you place your hand on the right side of the breast and say 'I am.' There, you involuntarily point out the Self. The Self is thus known. But, the individual is miserable because he confounds the mind and the body with the Self. This confusion is due to wrong knowledge. Elimination of wrong knowledge is alone needed. Such elimination results in Realization.



"The Heart, the Self, the Truth, the Brahman, the Atman are all synonymous and identical," says Sri Bhagavan. 'I AM' is the Truth, in all of us. I am 'this' or I am 'that' is the untruth (and, thus to be eschewed). To remain as 'I AM' ever, is the direct teaching of *Sadguru* Bhagavan Ramana. Guru's Grace is resplendently showered on one who puts this unique teaching of Guru Ramana into practice. Such constant practice is the highest compense a true devotee can offer to the Great Master. Guru's '*Anugraha*' – Benediction – is always there, assured Sri Bhagavan.

* Verse 18 in *Reality in Forty Verses Supplement*: "Between the two breasts, below the chest and above the abdomen, there are six (psychic) organs of various colors. Of these, one, looking like a water lily bud, is the Heart and it is situated at two digits' distance to the right of the center. In the Heart (*hridaya*) shines the 'I-I.' ♥

Photo of V. Ganesan, grand-nephew of Sri Ramana Maharshi, taken at AHAM Center, USA.

♥ Awaken To Awareness Retreats ♥



Reflection Lake

Why not "give yourself" a 2 - 5 day retreat time of abiding in Pure Awareness? This is simple, effortless "being meditation" at AHAM's tranquil, 37-acre meditation Retreat Center. The "Awaken to Awareness Retreat" is perfect for those wanting to "get away from it all" and to experience deep peace, solitude, and relaxation. Enjoy our quiet meditation trails and beautiful Reflection Lake. There is personal guidance into the experience of Self-Inquiry – "the eyes open" meditation that can be used by anyone, anytime, and anyplace. Experience this, and much more of AHAM's transformational teaching... all in a very "laid back" and relaxed format.

Contact the Center soon.

"I am able to recognize the awareness which I was familiar with but didn't recognize as such. I recommend this to anyone who is interested in Self-Inquiry."

– G. L., Yellow Springs, OH

**Enjoy any season
of the year**



Meditation Path



Front Yard

Upcoming Awaken To Awareness Retreats: August 15-17, September 5-7, and October 31-November 2, 2008. Registration required at least one week prior to program. Call the AHAM Center at 336-381-3988 or email <ahamcntr@asheboro.com> to register or for more information.



Kale Salad

Use Green Kale Leaves

1 part Nama Shoyu (raw, unpasteurized soy sauce)
3 parts unrefined Sesame Oil
Grated Ginger (peel ginger, then freeze, then grate.)

Top with hemp seed (raw, of course) for added nutrition (or sesame seeds if you can't find hemp seeds)

Wash hands thoroughly and apply dressing by massaging it into the kale leaves. This softens the kale. ♥



Daily Messages

AHAM sends out Daily Messages for transforming the mind and realizing the true nature of the Self, or real God, based on the Teaching of Sri Ramana Maharshi. If you wish to receive these FREE daily messages, Monday to Friday, simply e-mail your request to the AHAM Center at: ahamcntr@asheboro.com Subject: Daily Messages

Here's an example:

Heart Watch

Every four hours, during our Heart Times, one of our staff sits in silent meditation in our sanctuary and consciously envisions a successful conclusion of the particular need of each person for whom a request has been made. If you would like to have a request placed in our Heart Watch book, then phone, mail, or e-mail your prayer request to the AHAM Center. ahamcntr@asheboro.com; Subject: Heart Watch Request

Question: When my mind wanders during meditation, in spite of my attempts to control it, should I give it up?

Bhagavan: One need not abandon meditation, thinking that it is the nature of the mind to wander. Whatever one practices becomes natural. If control is practiced persistently, that will become natural.



Upcoming Events



August:

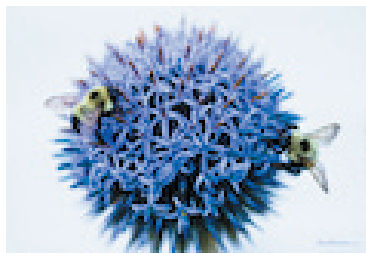
- 2 - 10 Intensive Self-Inquiry Training/Retreat
- 15 - 17 Awaken to Awareness Retreat
- 22 - 24 AHAM's 30th Anniversary Celebration

September:

- 4 - 7 Conscious and Clear Living [1st] (Prereq: Conscious Communication and Relationship)
- 5 - 7 Awaken to Awareness Retreat
- 17 - 21 Conscious Communication and Relationship (Prereq: Living Meditation)

A new section titled "Heart Notes" will be added to the HEART to HEART. You are invited to share you life experiences of using the Teaching in your day to day life. Please send your 'story' in to <viv09@aham.com>. Subject: Heart Notes.

AHAM's 30th Anniversary Celebration August 22-24, 2008



For information on any of our programs,
contact the AHAM Center at:
<ahamcntr@asheboro.com>
Subject: Program Information

Photo by Ron Whitaker, a graduate of AHAM



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In loving service,

AHAM Publications