



HEART to HEART

Consciousness speaking to Consciousness

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The Association of Happiness for All Mankind

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Living *From* the Freshness of Now



The Self is here and now, and alone. – Sri Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi

Heart of the Matter

Humility

From *There is Neither I Nor Other Than I, There is Only...* by A. Ramana pp. 188-189

Humility is most beneficial, *even necessary* for true, radical, or in-depth understanding of a subject or situation. One cannot perceive the subtleties of *true* spirituality, or effectively live or apply its fine-tuned revelations without having or acquiring simple, genuine humility. Humility is surrendering all sense of intellectual knowing or “already knowing” and the so-called “knowing self” to the *open honesty* of *not* knowing. Humility is *not-knowing*; it is knowing or confessing that “I really *don't* know.” It is “teachability.” It is true Wisdom. This opens the door of Intuition.

To read or hear this message while thinking, “*I already know this,*” is not allowing you to actually, *fully* comprehend it, to *truly* hear it or *really* know it. Instead, it is knowing or hearing only the past, your concepts and beliefs, your conditioned mind’s earlier programming. You are listening to your mind and ego tell you what it knows, which is *not* knowing what is *now* being presented or offered; rather it is your opinion, your concept or belief *about* it. If there is a sense of “I” that is thinking or “knowing” this, then such so-called knowledge is based entirely on the past, not on this *here* and *now* communication. This is a very subtle point of fine-tuned precision, or veracity.

Humility is being open and receptive to what is occurring or being offered, without the inclination to debate, defend, enforce or change it with *one's own* position or point of view about it, with one’s accumulated concepts, beliefs, opinions or theories of the past. It is to be open and receptive to what is *presently so*, without trying to adapt or interpret it to some “other” preconceived notion, standard of belief, or theory held about it – either for or against it. Humility is holding *no position* with regard to what is presently occurring or being presented, but is being open and allowing it to occur or be presented in its own natural way, *as it is*.

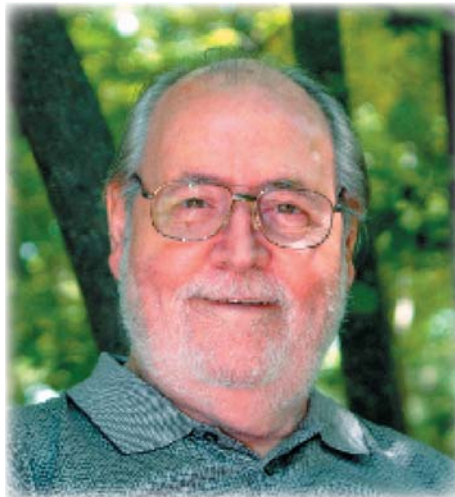
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How often have I sought the advice of others when I have been confused, troubled, upset or suffering? And then, when they suggest letting go of something in order to be free of dilemma, I *defend* the very position I am holding that is causing my upset? This is not humility, but arrogance, or defending “my” position and need or desire to “look good” or “be right.”

When asking another person for guidance or advice, if I am not *already willing* to admit that *I don't know*, or that what I know *is not adequate or sufficient*, do I listen to the advice I requested, or continually weigh and evaluate what is being offered against my own concepts, ideas and beliefs of the past?

I must be willing to admit that my present knowledge or beliefs are insufficient, inadequate, or incapable; or otherwise I would not need to ask another for advice.

Of course, it is wisdom to ask for advice from someone with more practical knowledge or experience of a situation than myself; but it is wiser still to know just *who* to ask, that is, the one that can be trusted, as to their accuracy and integrity, with regard to any advice given on an important issue or situation.



In the long run, humility (or the openness of “not-knowing”) may reveal just who I am able to trust, for true humility is very close to the Self, or the Highest Wisdom. It often draws to the one seeking advice those who are honest, trustworthy and genuinely helpful. This comes from the grace of the Self, the spiritual Heart shining as the Source of being. It even reveals on the surface what is needed, when humility is genuine.

People are usually much more interested in “being right” than in really learning or hearing the truth, or *what's so* regarding a thing, event, situation, or issue. This is the usual, ordinary strategy of the ego-mind with its conditioned content of mental patterns of the past, which ceaselessly functions to assure and maintain its own survival and the survival of everything with which it has become identified.

This means one must be willing to release or reject the mind’s beliefs of the past, and even eventually let go of the mind itself in order to know the Highest Truth, the pure Awareness of the very Self now shining as the Heart of Being. ♥

*Humility is being open
and receptive to what is.*

Love Note From The Heart

Discovering How to Live From the Freshness of Now

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

There is so much out there about not living in the past or future and about the "real 'present' we can give ourselves is a gift of the Present Moment of NOW." But how does that work in practical terms in our day-to-day lives?

As I was growing up, I had so many illnesses that I missed a lot of school. I struggled along just getting by each year, being conditioned by feelings of inadequacy and ignorance along the way, finally finishing the twelfth grade.

Later in life, after meeting Ramana, it simply fit for me when he would speak of "humility" as "not-knowing." I could readily admit my lack of an intellectual basis for an understanding of "the way it all works." I simply knew that I didn't know, even though it was very vulnerable for me to admit this openly. So, I began to feel that this teaching might work for me when he would share with us such things as, "One cannot perceive the subtleties of true spirituality, or effectively live or apply its fine-tuned revelations without having or acquiring simple, genuine humility (a knowing that I don't know)."

I then began to notice that when I admitted to myself (or even out loud) that I didn't know, the pressure on me to know was released, actually creating a space for real knowing to occur. I experienced that coming into any situation with a sense of humility or not knowing is what allows *natural* Intelligence to come forth. This kind of Intelligence comes from the heart and core of Being, revealing *what's so* within us, or drawing people to us whom we can trust for guidance and/or assistance.

The key is humility, a willingness to admit that *I don't know*. Ramana confirms this experience when he says, "What is needed in the moment, comes from the grace of the Self, the spiritual Heart shining as the Source of being." In this Freshness of Now, there is no past dictating to us through our self-imposed limitations. We are simply letting go and allowing it all to be what it is, as it is.

As I am looking at it now, what has inhibited me from living in this "freshness" was my ego-mind's effort to appear smart. As this tendency rose up in me the steps of Self-Inquiry were there to unwind it... beginning by telling the truth about it... experiencing the experience... inquiring into the Source of Being... and letting go into the natural inward flow... and once again relaxing and resting in the Heart. Nothing to do; simply being the freshness, the aliveness of Being, NOW! All is directed from here.

It appears that life's challenges are being used to bring our attention back to the truth of who-we-really-are. From here all that is left is gratitude and a love of what is, as it is. And, a pure child-like joy that spills over into life. Going for it! Playing and dancing as if no one is watching! ♥

Stay loose
Celebrate every gorgeous moment
Go snow tubing
Learn to watch snails
Plant impossible gardens
Say "yes" to everything
Make friends with uncertainty
Swing by moonlight
Take lots of naps
Give money away
Laugh a lot
Take moonbaths
Giggle with children
Listen to old people
Open up
Dive in
Bless yourself

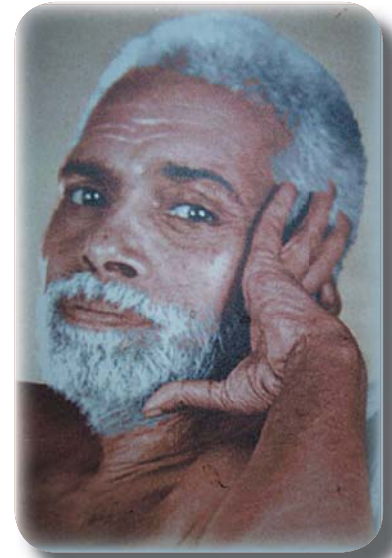


Teachings of Bhagavan Ramana

Pointers From Sri Bhagavan Ramana

From *Pointers From Sri Bhagavan Ramana* by Ramesh Balsekar.

1. First, one sees the SELF as objects, then one sees the SELF as void, then one sees the SELF as SELF. Only, in the last, there is no "seeing" because seeing is BEING.
2. All that one has to do is to "give up being aware of other things, that is, the not-Self." Then, pure awareness alone remains.
3. If you understand waking and sleep in their essence you will understand "life" and "death." The only difference is that waking and sleep happen daily.
4. When the "mine" is given up, it is *chitta-shuddhi* (purification of mind). When the "me" is given up it is *Jnana* (Wisdom).
5. The mind turned inwards is the SELF, turned outward it becomes the "ego" and the whole world. The One is real and the many are the mere names and forms — like gold and the ornaments.
6. In the mind two things do not exist at the same time — God and *samsara* (cycle of birth and death). God is already there, not *samsara*. You do not see this on account of the *samsara*-rubbish you have filled your mind with. If you turn the mind inward, instead of outward on things, then you see the mind merges in the One Unity which alone exists.
7. We do not know anything about the *Paramatman* or the Universal Self. We know only that we exist. Therefore, all that is necessary is to find out the truth or source of oneself, by turning the attention within.
8. As the mind tends to go out, it must be turned inwards — then and there. It goes out looking for happiness in pleasures outside oneself. But the knowledge and experience that the external objects cannot give real happiness, keeps it in check. This is *vairagya* or dispassion.
9. Mind is Consciousness which has put on limitations. You are the SELF; later, you take on limitations and become the mind. Mind is only the identity of the SELF with the body.
10. If Self-Inquiry is made as to whether the mind exists, it will be found that it does not exist. That is itself the true control of the mind. All other methods of mind-control amount to mind controlling the mind, which is like a thief supposed to catch himself!
11. The purpose of the "intellect" is to realize the difference between pleasure and happiness, to realize its own dependence upon the Higher Power and the necessity to surrender itself to that Higher Power.
12. The "Master" is not outside you, as you seem to imagine. He is within. He is the SELF. Recognize this truth. Seek within and find Him there. Then, you will have constant communion with Him. Your mind is outgoing and sees objects as being outside, and the Master among them. But the Master is the SELF. Suppose your body moves from place to place, does it ever move away from the SELF? So also, you can never be without the Master.
13. The SELF is not found in external objects. Turn the mind within and plunge inwards. You are the SELF.
14. The ego-less "I AM" is not a thought. It is the Truth, it is Realization. The meaning or significance of "I" is "God." The experience of "I AM" is to "BE STILL."
15. Stillness of mind or Peace is "Self-Realization" — there is no moment when the SELF is not.
16. Reality is that which transcends all concepts, including that of God; inasmuch as the name of God is used, it cannot be Reality. The Hebrew word — JEHOVAH = "I AM" — expresses God correctly. Absolute Be-ing is God. ♥



Words of Wisdom

Fearless Compassion – Harvesting Kindness through Compassionate Honesty

The following article is taken from *The Sacred Art of Lovingkindness* by Rabbi Rami Shapiro pp. 19-21

A religious man is a person who holds God and man in one thought at one time, at all times, who suffers harm done to others, whose greatest passion is compassion, whose greatest strength is love and defiance of despair. - Abraham Joshua Heschel

What is it about lovingkindness that makes it a power unto itself, a power capable of “transmuting even the most relentless enmity,” and changing an enemy into a friend? Can it be that “being nice” to someone is enough to change them and their relationship with you? I don’t think so.

I don’t think lovingkindness is about being nice. I believe it is about being fearless. When the Dalai Lama affirms the religion of kindness, he is talking about a religious attitude that mirrors the truth without distortion. The greatest kindness one can offer another is compassionate honesty. That is to say, to allow the other to see the consequences of her actions without imposing any judgments or prejudices of your own. It is this seeing that transforms the seer.

You cannot change another person, and if you think you can and intend to use lovingkindness as a strategy for doing so, you will fail – and fail miserably. Indeed, you cannot even change yourself, for the you that is to be changed is the you that is instigating the change. This is like trying to hear your own ear or kiss your own lips. It can’t be done.

What changes us is our encounter with reality. When we really see what it is we do and how what we do impacts the world around us, then we are ready to change, if change is necessary. I have learned this over and over again – I have to learn this over and over again, since in my case the lesson doesn’t seem to translate from event to event.

I have what might be called a pleaser personality. I want to please other people not because I care about them, but because by pleasing them I can keep them under control. Or so I tell myself. I tend to agree to things I really don’t want to do just to keep the peace. Of course the peace this keeps isn’t real; in fact, I experience resentment and anger rather than a sense of peace when I do this. Yet I do it over and over again, thinking that I am getting away with something, and that people can’t see through what I am doing.

The truth is just the opposite. People who know me well will call me on this behavior. They will show me that it hurts them to have me try to manipulate them by playing the pleaser. When they are clear with me about the impact of my actions, simply stating the truth without attacking me in the process, I cannot help but realize that there is no love in what I do. In fact, my behavior is driven by fear: fear of their reaction if I were honest and simply said “no” to the request at hand.

By showing me the truth without using that truth to manipulate me, my friends and family have freed me to respond to situations in a new way. I hesitate to even call this “change.” I don’t know if anything has changed. All I know is that I see and exercise options that were unknown to me previously. This is how compassion transforms relationships – not by changing anything but by revealing everything.

Can you live this fearless compassion? I don’t know. I would like to believe so, but I cannot point to anyone I know who does so constantly. Perhaps compassion is not an end but a process; you don’t master it, you simply work with it day by day. What would it be like to work with compassion? ♥

Heart Note

Heart Notes are stories from AHAM graduates living the teaching of Self-Inquiry in their ordinary lives in the workplace, at home, etc. You are invited to share your experience of how Self-Inquiry has been significant for you. Please email your story to <ahampublications@aham.com> attention HEART to HEART.

I have been meditating and searching for enlightenment for many years. Most of my work had been that of a solitary sitting meditation with the notion of someday becoming enlightened, but little if anything ever happened. I now realize that this type of practice was largely nothing more than ego preserving itself. I was afraid to present myself to a teacher or commit to a group because ego knew that it would be in jeopardy; so year after year passed in this fashion.

But still there was persistence in this search. After retiring I moved to a small city in central North Carolina. One day, while meditating, the determination came to me: "I am going to do something different." Years ago I had heard of Ramana Maharshi from a Zen teacher and this must have still been in my mind. Soon I came upon a book with Ramana Maharshi's sayings in it. This book seemed to be completely in tune with my understanding and I felt very encouraged by it. When I searched the Internet for articles about Ramana Maharshi I found that there was a Center presenting his teachings and it was only 11 miles from where I lived!

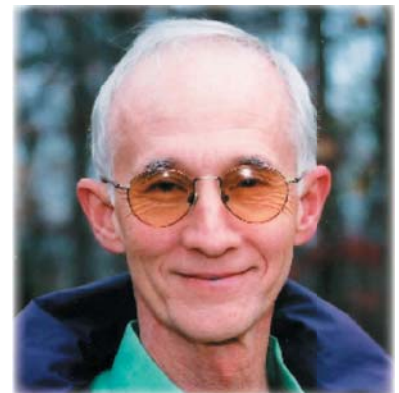
Now I attend the AHAM Center and practice Self Inquiry. This has awakened the realization that the acceptance of the ego as real and basing everything on this false but deep-seated notion is the main problem I faced. It is possible to read the words of Ramana Maharshi and to "know" it, but, in my case at least, as soon as the mind (ego) "knows" that the ego is a fiction the deep assumption arises that "I've got it" and ego goes on about its business; I see that this is one of the many ways the ego survives.

With Self-Inquiry, one turns attention (which usually is directed outwards) in an inward direction toward the core of one's being. With practice this has become easier and occurs more often. This in itself alleviates suffering. Then as one investigates deeper into the nature of one's self, which turns out to be the Self, which is always and already free, unborn and undying, and complete, nothing more needs to be done.

Because of the lifelong assumption that the ego is real (that I really exist as a person in time and space), however, I find that I must keep on with this practice, in spite of all the insights which arise. It is easy for the ego to latch onto one or the other very significant insight, feel satisfied, say, "That's It!," and go back to business as usual. For this reason it is very good to be around other people who are on the same path. In AHAM this is called Conscious Company and, to me, in one way or another, this is crucial to prevent the ego from staying in charge.

Finally there is gratitude to A. Ramana, our teacher, and to Elizabeth, to my AHAM sponsor, to all the rest of the Conscious Company, and to my wife for her unending and whole-hearted support.♥

George Lutman
Asheboro, NC



Self-Inquiry Instruction at AHAM

October, 2008 Neutralizing Your Negative Past (NNP) Graduates (This is the second half of the Self-Inquiry Series)

"I am experiencing more trust in that when I still the mind I receive guidance. I am experiencing peace, self-acceptance and gratitude."

– Annette Davidson
Gainesville, FL



"I have gotten a deepening of the Truth of my Being. A greater acceptance of this truth. I don't see how I can look at the world again with the same eyes."

– Kelly Santillo
Yarmouth, ME



"Forgiveness is really for myself since the traits I see are in me. I also feel more secure in the Inquiry process."

– Hanna Coe
Morehead City, NC

"I am able to forgive what I see in the present moment. I want to be with others only from love."

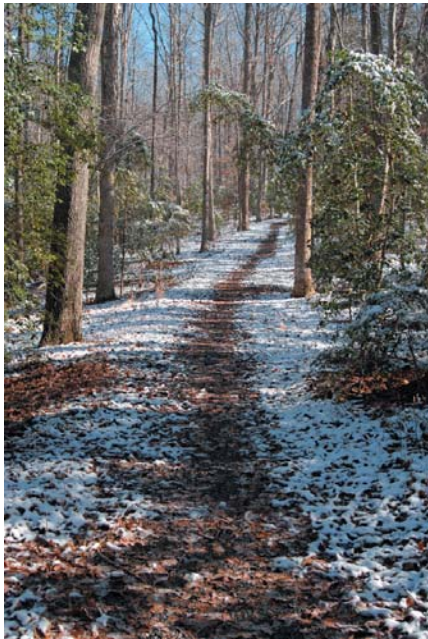
– Jennie Comer
Asheboro, NC



Upcoming Neutralizing Your Negative Past Training: February 18-22, 2009. (Pre-requisite: Self-Inquiry Retreat/Training.) 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.

Awaken to Awareness Retreats

Enjoy Any Season of the Year

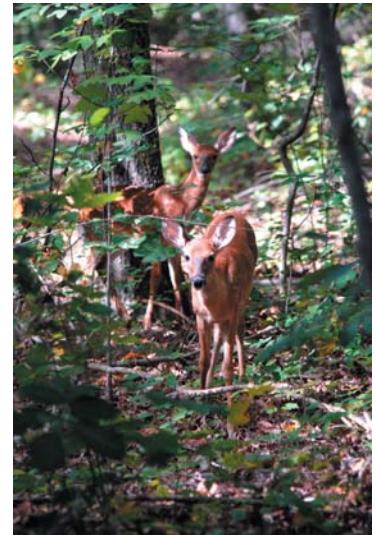


AHAM Meditation Path



AHAM Path

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.



Fawn's Visiting on
AHAM's Property

"The Awaken to Awareness Retreat is a great first step in becoming aware that distractions reside within and not without. I am experiencing strength and confidence that I have what I need."

*– Paula Davis
Greensboro, NC*

Contact the Center soon.

Upcoming Awaken to Awareness Retreats: January 23-25 and February 13-15, 2009. 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.

Making a Connection

Correction: In the December '08 issue of the HEART to HEART, the incorrect name was given on the India Pilgrimage flyer. It is Senthil holding the stalk of bananas not Panneer.

Front page photo "Sun's Rays" taken by AHAM family member Rick Smith, High Point, NC



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

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: →

Experience Meditation on the Telephone

Learn to bring stillness & peace
into your life

Every Sunday

Call (712) 338-8000 + code 2398#
A FREE one-hour phone call
with guided meditation,
sharing, fellowship, and
answers to your questions.

Call begins at 7:30 pm EST
(Call in 5-minutes early)

Try it *This Sunday*

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Asheboro, NC



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The world is (said to be) God's creation, to those that delight in it, regarding it as real; but it should be regarded as of the stuff of the mind by those that seek to know the Truth (of the Self) in order to become free (from bondage).

AHAM's electronic-HEART to HEART Publication – published monthly by AHAM, Inc.

This monthly electronic publication is the continuation of AHAM's original paper-printed magazine also titled HEART to HEART, which was in existence for several years shortly after the development of AHAM in 1978. Its main purpose is to spread the teaching of AHAM, which is primarily Self-Inquiry, and the Pure Teaching of Sri Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi. Self-Inquiry is the core and central theme of AHAM's own pure teaching.

It is AHAM's ongoing spiritual mission to assist one and all in transcending and ultimately eliminating all emotional pain, suffering, conflict, contradictions, and confusion seen and felt in their lives and in the world, which is caused by identifying with the body-mind and one's ego appearing in the world of time and space. It is to bring about real and lasting peace, freedom, and happiness for all who are ready and willing to receive it.

AHAM is here to share the Highest Truth – that there is not now, never has been, nor will there ever be a single, separate, individual being. There is always only this One Self, or One Reality, appearing as all the apparent "others" and revealing this One Self to Itself.

The e-HEART to HEART is also a wonderful way for readers to be connected with AHAM and its pure teaching, especially if you cannot come to the AHAM Center in the USA, or to our ashram in India.

This message has always been what we have to share, whether in the original paper printed version or now in this electric or e-version. The purity of the teaching has never changed, nor will it ever as far as Ramana, its founding spiritual director is concerned.

This is a free publication. However, your donations, gifts, or contributions to its continuation are very welcome and assist us in the operation of our two centers. Please feel free to pass this publication on to friends, and send us any questions you may have regarding either AHAM or your spiritual practice (*sadhana*). Please give us permission to print both your question and our answer in the e-HEART to HEART. All comments and suggestions are always welcome.

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Please contact <ahampublications@aham.com> for your suggestions or comments. Feel free to share this publication with your friends and family. Past issues starting with January, 2008 can be found on our website: <http://www.aham.com/inspiration/index.html>

In loving service,
AHAM Publications

THE ASSOCIATION OF HAPPINESS FOR ALL MANKIND (AHAM) is a non-profit organization, incorporated in the state of North Carolina. AHAM offers a unique spiritual system and process of meditation called Self-Inquiry, which ultimately leads to the radical experience of Enlightenment or Self-Realization. AHAM has been serving the worldwide spiritual community with its curriculum of conscious-transforming programs since August 1978.

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