



# Heart To Heart

Invitation from AHAM India

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## At the feet of Arunachala

### What is a Pilgrimage?

Pradakshina<sup>1</sup> around Arunachala early morning like Carmen Sweetman from Nashville, TN who spent a week at our ashram at the end of April 2009. It was



In Virupaksha Cave is located part way up the eastern face of the mountain, Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi lived there for 15 years.



her first time to India and she came to pay homage to Bhagavan and Arunachala.

Bhagavan said, everything of the mountain is holy. This cave is silence itself. For many it is a special place to meditate and somehow the initial heat felt just disappears.



### Meditating and having breakfast at Ramana Ashram.

Before finishing Pradakshina, we stop at Ramana Ashram to meditate in the old Hall and delight in a typical Indian breakfast eaten the Indian way...



### AHAM Ashram rooftop

Some afternoons are perfect on the rooftop in full gaze of Arunachala



1- Pradakshina (*pra* signifies the removal of all sins, *da* the fulfilment of desires, *kshi* freedom from the cycle of rebirth, and *na* spiritual liberation)

Heart To Heart

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Keeping all of us aware of what is going on at the source of our lineage

## New in the Ashram

There is sun in India and our first step in utilizing some of this solar power will be installing of solar water heaters. In June, the bathrooms in the backhouse will be

converted from electric to solar. The long-range plan is to have as much as possible of our electric converted to solar.



Jan Sundell  
Ashram Coordinator



## Community Activities

**Arunachala Village School (AVS)** is a village school providing education to the poor and orphans with emphasis on creativity in an environment of love and respect and that is not what we have but who we are.

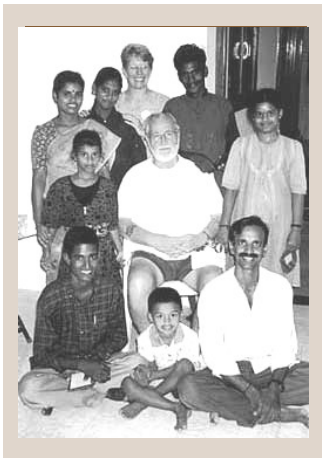
**AVS and AHAM** joined together to plant 150 trees along the roadway going to the village of the school. Each Christmas AHAM provides an afternoon program sharing a little about Christmas as part of their cultural awareness. Mary Minner, the creator of the "Quiet on the Inside" program for children spent two months at AHAM and combined her stay with her own pilgrimage to India and sharing "The Quiet" with the children. They all learned by their own experience to just ask "who." Julie created a dance program with the children.

Last winter, Vivian read a story, Jan taught the children a song and the rest of us sang along and enjoyed!



## Life in the AHAM Ashram

### The Ashram Staff



**2002** From Left to right  
**Front Row** :- Prabhu, (Gopal, son of Panneer), Panneer;  
**Middle Row** :(Laskhmi and Priya, daughters of Panneer);  
**Back Row**: Sujatha, Hindu (Married and moved away), Jan, Senthil

The staffs begin their day (after bathing in the ashram and changing into uniforms) with 5 minutes of silence in the AHAM Sanctuary. After the silent time, there is a startup meeting where the activities and assignments of the day are reviewed. The lead for the meeting rotates between 4 of the staff members (those that speak both English and Tamil, the language of this state in India). The men staff take care of the gardens and buildings and all the shopping and errand running. During the wintertime the gardens are lush and flowers prolific thanks to their loving care. The women staff provide us with the pleasant smells of the lunch cooking and care not only for the delicious food but also the laundry and main house cleaning. After the lunch break and short siesta, the afternoon session begins again with 5 minutes of silence

in the sanctuary and then start-up for the balance of the day.

In their loving support of the ashram environment they work quietly and do their utmost to be examples of Happiness for All Mankind.



**2009** From Left to right  
Subramanian (Retired Watchman), Pachiamutu (Watchman), Prabhu, Manju (Relief Watchmen and temporary), Senthil, Panneer, Sujatha, (Vijayai, daughter of Muniama and Family Network participant), and Muniamma

## Experiencing India

Seven times in India and each time the purpose of my going was to be in the presence of my master or guru.

The last 3 times were the times where I was graced to be with A. Ramana. The first meeting with A. Ramana was in 1998-99 at the Ramana Maharshi Ashram in Tiruvannamalai.

I always stay a minimum of a month, not only to allow the body to adapt to the time, culture and climate but most of all to settle into oneself and to deeply relax, which seems to be an important ingredient for steady abidance into self.

Being at AHAM India is truly a gift. Everything there supports the deepening and the ripening of one's meditation. Although in truth, grace has no location, Ramana Maharshi's grace, Arunanachala strong presence and most of all A. Ramana's presence for me are amplified when I am physically in India.

A. Ramana is very available and very generous of himself, this is really a time to bath and rejoice in his presence. We are with him from morning meditation to evening meal and often the meals are becoming Satsangs. What a delight and precious moments.

Also for me Tiruvannamalai has a particular flavor. So many beings have become Jnani (enlightened), pure awareness, Love is tangible, and you can almost touch it.

I sincerely recommend anyone who has not yet been there to go without delay ...

Some might say: Yes, I would like but how can I make it happen?

I, too live and work in the "world", so in order to go to India, I have to prepare the ground a while in advance. So, here is what I do:

1- Get the OK from the company I work for to take time off next winter (2009-2010).

2- Put some money aside on a special account every paycheck for all the expenses such a trip involve (airline ticket, donation to the Ashram, pilgrimage fee if applicable, etc...).

3- This year I would like to buy the airline ticket as early as the end of April or early May. The tickets are cheaper when bought in advance (I will get a cancellation assurance in case!).

4- Making sure my passport would still be valid at the time of departure

5- About a month before leaving, I will get a visa (the form can be downloaded from the internet).

As far as what I am bringing with me, the last two times in India, I took only one set of western clothes and bought in Tiruvannamalai, Punjabi suits (Pants and tunic). They are inexpensive and comfy. Of course, you can always bring your own summer clothes (no sleeveless) and since there is a cleaning service provided at the ashram (for a few rupees) you don't need to take a lot of clothes. A good pair of walking shoes and sandals will be a good idea.

Silence prevails at the ashram but I always found that earplugs fulfilled their purpose for me when sleeping in a dormitory form of accommodation.

There are endless little tips like that I could share.....

The main thing is to listen to the call and to let it happen. For me, it is clear and already done. After that, it is just a question of getting ready step by step...

See you in India

Love

*Saroja*





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## 2009-2010 Calendar

### Programs

**Pilgrimage 1** : Nov. 09—29, 09

**Sat Sanga Retreat:** Dec. 9 - 14, 09

**Intensive Self-Inquiry Training:** Jan. 04 - 17, 10

**Pilgrimage 2:** Jan. 25 - Feb. 14, 10

**Sat Sanga Retreat:** Feb. 17 - 22, 10

**Awareness Retreats:** October/November 09.  
 Wednesday am to Friday afternoon (TBD).

## AHAM's Purpose



AHAM's primary purpose and on-going mission is the dissemination of **Self-Inquiry, the Consciousness Transforming Process** for realizing and abiding in the true Self, which is not different from conscious communion with Real God. **Self-Inquiry, the subjective investigation into oneself in the form of the question "Who Am I?",**

was first introduced to the world by the illumined sage, **Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi**. He lived in South India, on the eastern slope of the Holy Hill, **Arunachala**, until His passing in 1950. Arunachala has been known since ancient times as a place of spiritual importance.



**Is India calling you?**

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or

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**Want more information?**