

SRI SESHADRI ASHRAM

DISC CONTENTS

Click on any of the items below to open that file.

SRI RAMANASRAMAM

THE MOUNTAIN PATH EDITIONS

THE MAHARSHI NEWSLETTERS

COMPLETE BOOKS

BOOK EXTRACTS

PHOTOGRAPHS —

75 Full-page Photographs of Bhagavan

520 Archival Photographs of Bhagavan

Full-page Arunachala photographs

Pradakshina map & Shrines

Sri Arunachaleswara Temple

TIRUVANNAMALAI CHARITIES —

Rangammal Memorial School for the Deaf

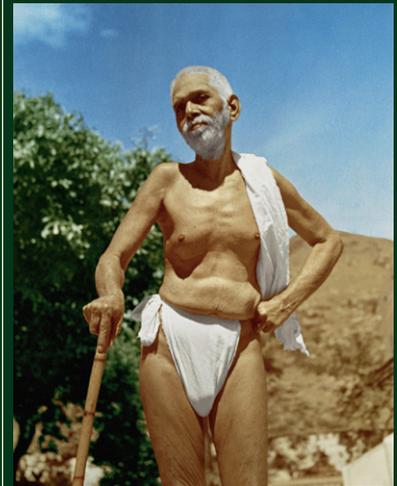
Shanthimalai Trust

Arunachalam Trust School

VIDEO PREVIEWS

AUDIO FILES

To return to this page use the 'Home' key on your keyboard.



Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi
and Mount Arunachala

CD File Names —

Sri Ramanasramam - ashram.pdf

Full-page photos of Bhagavan - restored.pdf

520 photographs of Bhagavan - archive.pdf

Complete Books - books.pdf

Book extracts - extracts.pdf

'Mountain Path' Journal - m_path.pdf

Arunachala photos - aruna.pdf

Maharshi Newsletters - maharshi.pdf

Arunachaleswara Temple - temple.pdf

Pradakshina map and Shrines - pradak.pdf

Rangammal School - rangamal.pdf

Shanthimalai Trust - shanthi.pdf

Sri Seshadri ashram - seshadri.pdf

Arunachalam Trust School - a_trust.pdf

Video previews - video.pdf

Sound files - audio.pdf

© Copyright 1999/2000 - Graham Boyd, England -
Sri Ramanasramam, India - Arunachala Ashrama
USA - All contributing photographers. All rights
reserved. See Copyright.txt for details.



The entrance to Sri Seshadri ashram

Sri Seshadri Ashram

Seshadri Ashram is situated immediately next door to Sri Ramanasramam on the road towards the town. Visitors to Sri Ramanasramam are often directed here when Sri Ramanasramam has no rooms available for them.

The special relationship that existed between Seshadri Swami and Bhagavan in the early years, is still held in high regard today by both ashrams. Below is a short introduction to Seshadri Swami and some of the stories surrounding his relationship with Bhagavan and his devotees. Sri Seshadri Ashram supports many sadhus and feeds the poor on a daily basis.

Sri Seshadri Swami

Seshadri Swami was born in 1870 at Vazhur in the North Arcot district of Tamilnadu, South India. He was brought up by his mother's uncle, Kamakoti Sastri, a learned scholar and a devout person in Kanchipuram. Seshadri learnt classical music and *puranic* lore from Kamakoti Sastri. Even at the early age of fourteen he had acquired sufficient mastery over important works in Sanskrit literature and could speak fluent Sanskrit. He evolved into a staunch devotee of Goddess Kamakshi of Kanchipuram.

Seshadri lived at Kanchipuram in their ancestral home. When he was seventeen he was initiated into Sakti (*Bala*) *mantra*, and carried on spiritual *sadhana* at night times in a cremation ground and in the shrine of his family deity Periandavar. He appears to have had a vision of the Goddess Sakti and to have been deeply influenced by it. He quickly lost interest in domestic matters and study, and took to wandering and performing *japa* of various *mantras*. He often spent whole nights in meditation. His state was not understood by anyone around him; he therefore left home and after wandering from place to place finally arrived at Tiruvannamalai in 1890. His relatives went there to bring him back, but in vain. He lived in Tiruvannamalai for about thirty-nine years. His *tapas* matured in course of time and the ultimate wisdom became his. It also gave him psychic powers such as telepathy, clairvoyance and prophecy.

Many in Tiruvannamalai however, considered him insane. This opinion of the people suited him and he acted as such sometimes.

Seshadri Swami found that Brahmana Swami (as Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi was referred to in the earlier years of his life at Tiruvannamalai), who stayed in the Arunachaleswara temple and who was deeply absorbed in *samadhi* at all times, was a soul of rare worth who had transcended

Sri Seshadri Swami Ashram

sense attraction, and withdrawn his senses from external objects; therefore Seshadri Swami tried to extend what help he could to the young Swami to save him from the mischief of urchins. He met Brahmana Swami again at Pavazhakunru and occasionally shared with him the food offered by *mutt* and by visitors. When Brahmana Swami moved to the hill Seshadri Swami went up to see him and occasionally ate with him.

He endeavoured to be unobtrusive in most of his activities. On some occasions, however, his aims were patent or expressed. He tried to help those who gave him food or shelter. One Subrahmanya Mudaliar of Tiruvarur, his mother, Alankarattammal, and wife, Kamakshiammal, were spending their time and wealth mostly on feeding *sadhhus* since 1908. For many years they offered food to Maharshi and to the *sadhhus* who lived with him as well as to Seshadri Swami. The latter tried to wean Mudaliar from his worldly activities and turn him inward. He therefore went up the hill once and asked Mudaliar, “You see, (my) younger brother is earning ten thousand rupees, I am earning a thousand rupees, why not you earn a hundred rupees at least?” Mudaliar understood that by ‘earning’ Seshadri Swami meant spiritual attainment, and by ‘younger brother’ the Maharshi. Seshadri Swami explained to him that the science of the Self was very easy to comprehend and that by neglecting it Mudaliar was incurring *Brahma hatya*, the mortal sin of slaying a *brahmin*. Mudaliar got frightened and went to Maharshi in whom he had more faith and reported this remark. “Well said,” replied Maharshi, “You are indeed murdering Brahman by refusing to understand that you are Brahman.”

Seshadri Swami generally prevented people from approaching him. If, however, they were devotees of ‘Ramanaswami’, as he called the Maharshi, he gave them the necessary help and encouragement.

Echammal, who fed Maharshi and his visitors daily, gave food to Seshadri Swami also whenever he went to her house. He gave spiritual instruction to Echammal. When she once asked about the *Mahavakyas* of the Upanishads and their import, he instructed her at length without reference to any book on that subject. When once, she was at her worship, he dropped in and asked her what she was adoring. “Only your portrait and Ramanaswami’s” was her reply. “Why do you not practise *dhyana* (meditation)?” he asked. Echammal wished to get further instruction from Seshadri Swami and asked him how to practise *dhyana*. He sat down and went into *samadhi* immediately. As he rose, he asked her, “Do you see, Echammal?” He also consoled her when she lost her foster child, Chellammal.

Seshadri Swami always advised people to stick to the particular path they had chosen for spiritual development. He was an adept in *mantra sastra*, and by constant repetition of *mantras*, had obtained a vision of his Goddess Kamakshi. He had practised numerous other *mantras* also and he could instruct the *mantra* suitable to the particular person who approached him for initiation. When he found that those who approached him had already faith in Bhagavan Ramana he would direct them to stick to him to the last. On such occasions he would either identify himself with the Maharshi or point out that there was really no difference in serving either of the two.

When a lady devotee thought within herself that she was not blessed enough to serve him, he replied to her unuttered thought: “What does it matter whether here (you serve me) or there (Ramana)?” Though he never asked anybody for anything, he would drop in sometimes at the

Sri Seshadri Swami Ashram

Arunachala temple where several disciples of the Maharshi lived and begged their food and, after remarking, “I suppose there are no others here (*i.e.* other than disciples of Maharshi)”, he would sit and take his food. At other places he would scatter food, and if his host remarked that this was *bhikshanna* (food received as alms), and therefore should not be wasted, he would reply, “You see, I am not scattering food; I am only offering some of it to beings around me.”

Somasundaraswami, a disciple of Maharshi, left him once, and was wavering in his mind as to where to go. In such a plight he waited for Seshadri Swami at the temple. As soon as the Swami came, he looked at Somasundaram, read his thoughts, and asked him to “go back to Ramana”. When Somasundaram still hesitated and waited, Seshadri Swami said emphatically, “Go, go, go at once to Ramana. Do not delay.” Somasundaram started off immediately and went back to the Maharshi though it was midnight then.

A Sastri of Chidambaram, who was often visiting Maharshi and serving at the ashram, stayed one night at the Arunachaleswara temple. To assist his spiritual practices, he often resorted to the use of the stimulating drug *ganja* (*cannabis indica*). Unfortunately, on this occasion, the drug used was impure. Poor Sastri was therefore distressed to find that, instead of making him spiritual, the drug had stimulated carnal thoughts in him. Not knowing what to do, he went and prostrated before Seshadri Swami who at once understood the situation and remarked, “I told you to give up this drug habit, yet you have taken it.” The Swami had never given him that advice, it was Maharshi who had. So Sastri discovered that Seshadri Swami was identifying himself with Maharshi.

When a public works contractor, A. V. Iyer, stood before Seshadri Swami thinking of visiting Maharshi, Seshadri encouraged him by saying, “*darshan* of Maharshi thoroughly cleanses the mind of all impurities.”

A very interesting scene between the Maharshi and Seshadri Swami was witnessed in 1908 by Vasudeva Sastri, a disciple of Maharshi. Seshadri Swami went up to the Mango Tree cave where Maharshi stayed and sat gazing at him. A minute generally sufficed to enable him to read the thoughts and nature of any individual. But, after long gazing at Maharshi, he pointed to Maharshi and remarked, “It is not clear what this (person) is thinking.” Maharshi however kept silent. Then Seshadri Swami, expressing his own view, said, “If one worships Arunachala, He will grant salvation.”

Maharshi: “Who is the person who worships and who is the worshipped?”

The Swami breaking into a loud laugh said, “That is just what is not clear.”

Then Maharshi expounded at length the *Advaitic* realisation of Unity of everything including God, the world and individual souls. Seshadri Swami patiently and quietly listened and at the end got up and said, “I cannot say anything; all this is dark to me. I at any rate worship.” So saying he faced the crest of the hill Arunachala, then prostrated himself ten or fifteen times and went down. And yet Seshadri Swami would sometimes

Sri Seshadri Swami Ashram

speak from the standpoint of *Advaita*, seeing all things as manifestations of the One Spirit. He has also expressed the *Advaitic* state to Ramana's devotees. Once a learned *pandit* was interpreting the *Bhagavad Gita* to Echammal at her house when Seshadri Swami dropped in. The proud *pandit* pointed to him and remarked, "See this man, not even after seven more births can he attain *jnana*." The Swami put up with the impertinence, stayed awhile, and while departing remarked, "If, when you taste food you see who it is that tastes, then you have known Brahman."

Once, Seshadri Swami asked his devotee, one T. V. Iyer, who also regarded Maharshi as his Guru, "Do you know there are three *lingas* (embodiments or visible representations) of God at Tiruvannamalai?"

Iyer: I do not know three. One Linga is the Hill, I know only that.

Swami: No, no; you know all the three.

Iyer: No, Swami, pray tell me what the other two are.

Swami: But you know them.

Iyer: No, Swami.

Swami: One *linga* they call Ramanaswami.

Iyer: Yes, Swami; now I know the second. Pray which is the third?

Swami: You know it too.

Iyer: No, Swami; I do not.

Swami: The third *linga* they call Seshadri.

Iyer: That is you, Swami: is it not?

Swami: You know it.

Iyer: I did not.

Swami: Yes, it is I.

When Seshadri Swami attained *Mahasamadhi* on 14th January 1929 and his body was about to be buried, Maharshi stood nearby for an hour witnessing the formalities amidst a crowd of thousands of people and added to the impressiveness and sanctity of the proceedings by his hallowed presence. It was Maharshi who had given elaborate instructions on the method of interring the sacred body of the Swami. The extent of Seshadri Swami's popularity and influence was seen by the spontaneous concourse of crowds that came in their thousands to honour his remains. His *Samadhi* which is situated next to Sri Ramanasramam continues to attract devotees from far and near.