

Ramayana Immersion

A Hero's journey to the self

*An immersion to unleash the hidden
potential*

September 17th to September 22nd 2018



Our Personal Energy is immense and seeks to act in ways that are natural, spontaneous and enlivening. We seek the good the true and the beautiful. However, many residues and traumas locked up in our unconscious move us in ways that go counter to our deepest wishes. This is especially so in contexts that act as a trigger to our unresolved fears or desires. The stories of *purANic* heroes has the potential to evoke us deeply. This is a great gift since we could use the evocation as a mirror to our own unconscious. The Ramayana is a journey of a hero, it is also the story of a person who has to confront his own inner demons at each threshold of growth. In the pursuit of the modern and the technological, we are losing our ability to discover and nurture ourselves through introspection and deep inner work. Working with the *purANa* through theatre and self-reflection is one of the most powerful and effective ways to gain mastery over our hidden potential.

वितर्कबाधने प्रतिपक्षभावनम् ।

yoga sUtra 2.33 - vitarka-bAdhane pratipakSha-bhAvanam

When one is hindered in the pursuit of right action through a contradictory influence or pull, contemplating on the ramifications of yielding to negative influences will help one stay on the path of right action.

We seek, through the text and the yoga sutra to help you find an answer to the questions, “how you have lived your life?” “how will you find meaning and or purpose in your life?”.

The design of the programme will enable the participant to engage with the thresholds and dilemmas that confront each of us as we seek to live with truth, beauty and goodness.

The RI is a lab

- It deploys the Learning Theatre methodology developed by Raghu Ananthanarayanan
- It is an opportunity to use the *itihAsa-purANa* as a *darshaNa*, a mirror unto oneself
- It is an invitation to experiment with oneself, delve into the depths of the invisible, the unarticulated and the disowned parts of one self by confronting the disowned “other”

The RI is an opportunity for introspection into the following:

- How can you reach your fullest potential by looking at the different parts of yourself?
- How can you understand relationships?
 - What are key choices you need to make in key relationships – do you choose by default or thoughtfully?
- How do you understand happiness? What choices make you happy? What takes you away from happiness?
- How do you address the challenges that life throws up in ways that are dharmic?

The RI is not

- an opportunity to learn the Ramayana
- an attempt for the faculty to offer their interpretation through discussions or discourses
- an opportunity to learn theatre or to appreciate tradition

For Whom

The programme is meant for:

- Leaders, Change Agents and Professionals in the field of Social Services, Management and the Arts wishing to delve inwardly and regenerate themselves.
- Those who wish to discover and develop creative processes of their own unfolding and therefore facilitate self-discovery in others.

This programme will therefore provide an opportunity for participants to:

- Discover and foster one's hidden heroic potential.
- Introspect upon our values and how they are lived
- Develop a personal foundation of interpersonal ethics and intrapersonal discipline.
- Introspect upon the way one holds and gives meaning to one's mission in life.

Yoga & Ramayanaa

Today, Yoga in various forms and shapes has become the preferred mode for self-development. The *arthashAshtra* recommends that all leaders must be yogis, the *nAtyashAstra*, the *vAstu shAstras* and a host of other texts specify that the professional must be a yogi. The reason is very simple. Yoga practiced in a holistic fashion ensures that a person becomes capable of being the best he or she can be. Leadership today must be holistic and work towards creating a sustainable world. Leaders and professionals need to strive continuously to perform at their peak capabilities. This means that one has to make a continuous investment in one's competencies, one's inner well-being and one's health. However, the meaning of Yoga is limited to *Aasana* and *prANAyAma* in most peoples' minds. Our myths were written to bring out the meaning of Yoga through stories that illustrate how different types of minds perceive a situation and how they respond.

The Ramayana uses the unfolding of Rama and Sita's life as the central archetypes of human development, Ravana as the anti-hero/shadow archetype to examine the principles of Yoga in the context of familial strife. Several other very important characters like Hanuman, Vibheeshana, Kumbhakarna, Laxmana and so on play a very key part in enabling us discover parts of ourselves. The Ramayana is a discourse on the Yoga of leadership and a discourse of *dhArmic* conduct. It not only captures the philosophical depth of yoga, it evokes the person deeply by portraying different ethical dilemmas confronted by Rama and Sita and describing their struggles as they delve into themselves and overcome these obstacles.

Design of the Programme

The two main components of the programme are:

One: the learning theatre

An Individual is simultaneously a member of multiple systems - organization, society, family and others. Each of these systems is a complex network of interdependent roles and processes with distinct values and norms. The diverse pulls and pressures of the systems and lack of integration and synergy in oneself result in diffused inner energies and consequently affects the expressions. The learning theatre is designed to focus on inner energies and enable coherent expressions. The methodology of work will be a flowing rhythm between these two aspects, namely, explorations into one's inner processes and working with theatre exercises.

Two: Ramayana

In the second half the participants will work with various themes drawn from the epic. Having explored the dynamics of heroism within, the participants will be introduced to the nuances of realizing the *puruShArTA* and navigating the *ariShad varga* (the six challenges on the path). The individual who explores this archetypal drama with authenticity enters the universal motifs of human suffering. Such engagement with one's *dhukka* is deeply insightful and healing. The stage is thus set for an honest introspection of one's inner patterns of feeling and thought and outer patterns of action in such contexts.

There will be a maximum of 20 participants in the group. No prior theatre experience or exceptional interest in fine arts is required for this adventure. Prior experience in inner work will be of value.

Preparatory work:

- 1) *Read the text -*
https://www.valmiki.iitk.ac.in/sloka?field_kanda_tid=1&language=dv&field_sarga_value=1
- 2) http://www.sacw.net/IMG/pdf/AKRamanujan_ThreeHundredRamayanas.pdf
- 3) *If you are conversant with Tamil, listen to An old music infused telling of the Ramayana recorded in the 1940s by Annasami Baghavathar, in the Marathi-Tamil traditions of Harikatha. <LINK>. About him -*
<http://www.thehindu.com/features/friday-review/music/annasami-bhagavatars-prowess-in-storytelling-grasp-of-facts-and-expertise-in-music/article6360859.ece>
- 4) *Answer a self-reflection questionnaire and bring it with you.*

Facilitators

This programme will bring together experienced facilitators in human processes and *antaranga sAdhana*

Programme Director: Pradeep Chakravarthy

Facilitation Partners: Pradeep Chakravarthy, Ajay Raghu

Ananthanarayanan and

Venue

Ritambhara Ashram

Kannuhatty,

Konavakarai, Kotagiri

Fees

The programme fee is Rs. 35,400/- This covers the faculty fee and related expenses.

Accommodation options at the Ritambhara Ashram are the following:

Twin Sharing rooms (Non A/C) - Rs. 14,160/- (16 pax) Tented

Accommodation - Rs. 8,850/- (8 pax)

This covers food and accommodation for 6 days. All prices include GST already.

*** There are a few scholarships on offer for those who would like to avail of them.*

Dates:

The immersion starts on **September 17th, 2018 (5pm)** and ends on **September 22nd, 2018 (2pm)**.

Last date for registrations: August 27th 2018 (Preparatory work starts soon after.)

For enquiries and registrations please write to ashram@ritambhara.org.

Note: *There may be some emotional stress involved during the Lab. Participants must take responsibility for self- screening if stressful situations are a concern. The Lab is not a substitute for therapy or psychiatric treatment. If you are currently in therapy or under psychiatric treatment, you are required to obtain a clearance from your therapist/ psychiatrist before attending. Please also consult your physician, in case you have a current condition of heart ailment or any chronic illness*

FACULTY



Pradeep Chakravarthy is an HR consultant and historian based out of Chennai. He graduated from the London School of Economics and has had more than 20 years of experience in HR and training in Cognizant, Infosys and McKinsey. He has been writing on Tamil Nadu's history and art for more than a decade and has 5 books on this area. You can also visit his website www.mysticalpalmyra.com.



Ajay Vishwanath has 15+ years of experience across Academics and L & D Domains. A Bharatanatyam dancer, with an MBA degree, Ajay has worked extensively in area of behavioural skills with individuals and groups, through his association with Pegasus. He has explored inner work, through his association with Isha yoga and Ritambhara. Ajay is now engaged in understanding and working with Body-knowledge to help individuals explore their full potential.



Raghu Ananthanarayanan will anchor the process. Raghu is a post graduate from IIT Madras who has focused on human behavior. He brings together his Yoga Sadhana and understanding of technological systems to bear on his central quest: how can each of us be the best that we can be? He uses Theatre and Puranas to enable people to realize their deepest aspiration. He is now engaged in creating a Coaching Certification programme called "Awakening Arjuna".
www.raghuananthanarayanan.com