Unit 1

Value Education

It enables us to be in **harmony within ourselves**, **with other human beings and with rest of nature** at large. Such an understanding will be vital for the successful conduct of our profession as well.

It deals with the learning of what is universally valuable to all of us, what is conductive to our individual and collective happiness and prosperity in a sustainable way

Need for Value Education

All of us consider something or the other to be valuable. We set our goals, our aims on this basis, and then set out to work towards achieving them. While the need for determining what is valuable to us may seem evident, let us investigate into this a little more to understand the need for value education. Let us look at the following aspects to appreciate the need for value education.

1. **Correct identification of our aspirations**: All human beings have aspirations. You may aspire to become a doctor or engineer or a lawyer, or a film star or something else. You must have made various plans for your future, be it immediate or long term. The planning may include your personal life, your family, your profession, your participation in the society and other such domains. But before you invest your energies to actualize your plans, it is important that you find out what you basically aspire for. Thus you need to identify your basic aspiration. Based on the correct identification of this basic aspiration, you can frame your goals and sub-goals appropriately and working for these, you may hope to fulfil your basic aspiration.

2. **Understanding universal human values to fulfil our aspirations in continuity**: Just identifying one's aspiration is not enough. We need to know how to fulfil our aspirations, how to go about actualizing our goals. Generally, we tend to pursue our goals in variety of ways as per our appraisal and beliefs. We keep on making experiments, learning from these and accordingly improving our understanding. This is how human beings have been moving on, right from the primitive 'Stone age' to the present day world of modern science and technology. Complete understanding of human values gives us a definite way to fulfil our aspirations.

    Basically all of us are aspiring to be happy and whatever appears conducive to our happiness becomes valuable to us. Values form the basis for all our thoughts, behaviour and actions. Once we have known what is valuable to us, these values become the basis, the anchor for our actions. We know what we are doing is right and will lead to the fulfilment of our basic aspirations. Values thus become the source for our happiness, our success, our fulfilment. Without an appropriate value framework, we will not be able to decide whether a chosen action is desirable or undesirable, right or wrong. Hence there is a prime need for correct understanding of the value domain.- Value Education is the input necessary to fulfil this need. When we live with the correct understanding of values, we are happy in continuity, otherwise we feel deprived, frustrated and unhappy. What are the values that you hold worthy in your life? Have you verified them to be conducive to your

happiness? It is important to explore the value domain in sufficient detail through value education. We also need to understand the universality of various human values, because only then we can have a definite and common program for value education. Then only we can be assured of a happy and harmonious human society.

3. **Complementarity of values and skills**: In the endeavour to fulfil our aspirations, two things are essential:
    a. First and foremost, one has to know what really is conducive to human happiness - i.e. happiness for one and for all, and happiness at all times. This is what becomes universally valuable to human beings. This is the 'value' domain, the domain of wisdom. This helps us to identify and set the right goals and to proceed in the right direction.
    b. Secondly, it becomes essential to learn methods and practices to actualize this goal, to develop the techniques to make this happen in real life, in various dimensions of human endeavour. This is the domain of 'skills'.

Thus values and skills have to go hand in hand. There is an essential complementarity between values and skills for the success of any human endeavour. For example, I want to lead a healthy life. I understand that health is the basic requirement for a human being. I then learn skills to judge what food will keep my body healthy, what physical practices will keep the body functioning properly, what would be the possible ways to do certain kinds of work with the body. All these fall under the domain of skills. Thus, both (values and skills) are important and these are complementary. Only wishing for good health will not help me keep my body fit and healthy and without having understood the meaning of health, I will not be able to choose things correctly to keep my body fit and healthy.

4. **Evaluation of our beliefs**: In absence of a correct understanding of universal human values, we are driven by our 'ad-hoc' values and beliefs. If we look deep into ourselves, we find that each one of us believes in certain things and we base our 'values' on these beliefs, be they false or true which may or may not be true in reality. For example, someone may believe that "A corporate job is the best kind of job", "IIT is the best college to go to", "Metro cities are the best places to live in" and so on. We can also have beliefs such as "I want to become a famous person. Being a world-famous person will make me happy", "Money will make me happy", "Success is the ultimate thing, by hook or by crook", "If I study longer I will have better grades" etc. All of us live with such beliefs. These beliefs come to us from what we read, see, hear, what our parents tell us, our friends talk about, what the magazines talk of, what we see on the TV etc. i.e. there is a whole body of belief-system that we live with at any given time and these together constitute our worldview. These beliefs spread out far and wide into all our realms of living. The interesting thing about beliefs is that they usually change with time and we can trace examples of these by looking at our life in the past. We might have thought at one point of time that getting into a good college is the most important thing and now that may have changed to being able to get a good job. Once we get into a good job, doing well in that job and earning a lot of money may be important. Once we have the money, getting into a good position may become important – i.e. what we believe is to be important, may keep changing with time. Many times, we may even find ourselves trapped in conflicting beliefs.

Another thing about beliefs is that they are usually not the same for everybody. Beliefs could be held by a small group or a large group of people but they are not universal. For example: getting good grades may be important to you, but being able to earn money may be important for your friends. You may think being environmentally friendly is important, your friend may think that it is okay to pollute the environment. This is not only true for ourselves, but largely true for most people around us: the beliefs keep changing from person to person. What I may believe to be of 'value' to me may not be of 'value' to your belief-system so when we interact, it may lead to conflicts and unhappiness. We face this problem today because the conditioned beliefs and values we hold today are usually contradictory, conflicting and unstable and not based upon the right understanding of values we are not very sure of their correctness.

Living our lives based only on beliefs cannot ensure happiness for us. This is very important for us to understand. Do we want to live with such shaky beliefs? Or do we want to know things for sure, for ourselves? We can either blindly follow our beliefs and assumed values, towards making our choices or we can base our choices upon values which are based on understanding of reality and we can ourselves validate them as well. What would you prefer?

5. **Technology and Human Values**: Technology is only a means to achieve what is considered "'valuable" ' for a human beings in an effective and efficient manner. It is not within the scope of technology to decide what is valuable. This decision lies outside its scope. It thus becomes primarily important to know correctly what is 'valuable'. Without this decision, technology can be aimless, directionless and can therefore be put to any use, either constructive or destructive.

It is thus with the understanding of values that we can decide on the appropriateness of technology and its application. Both the structure and use of technology is are decided by values. For example: if we value the relationship with the environment, we will work to create environment-friendly technologies (the structure of technology) and also put it to right use (use of technology), say, for the enrichment of environment, replenishment of natural resources etc. Conversely, if the relationship with the environment is something we do not value, things could be the other way round.

As students of technology and management, we will be studying, creating, implementing and managing technologies which will affect the lives of a large number of people. Getting trained on technology without deciding what is valuable, could even prove counter-productive as our technical skills are likely to be misused. Therefore, it is essential that we understand how technology relates to us as individuals and to human society and nature at large before we attempt to put it into practice.

Thus, there is a need to supplement technical education with value education. This will enable a human being to decide and pursue what is really 'valuable' i.e. conducive to human happiness, human welfare, what is of 'value' to him.

To conclude, Value Education enables us to understand our needs and visualize our goals correctly, and also indicate the direction for their fulfilment. It also helps remove our confusions and contradictions and enables us to rightly utilize the technological innovations.

Value Education is a crucial missing link in the present education system which must be adequately replenished. It must be remembered that to become an excellent professional, the excellence of values along with the excellence of requisite professional skills is required.

Basic Guidelines for Value Education

There are certain effective and widely acceptable guidelines which will enable the introduction of value education in the present system. Given below are broad guidelines to decide on what would qualify as an appropriate input in value education:

Universal

Whatever we study as value education has to be universally applicable to all human beings and be true at all times and all places. In addition, it need not restrict itself to a certain sect, creed, gender or nationality etc. So it has to deal with universal human values.

Rational

It has to be amenable to reasoning and not based on dogmas or blind beliefs. It cannot be a set of sermons or Do's and Don'ts.

Natural and Verifiable

We want to study something that is natural to us. Being natural means, it is acceptable in a natural manner to all human beings. When we live on the basis of such values that are natural to us, it leads to fulfilment, leads to our happiness and also is conducive to other people we interact with, as well as with nature. We also would like to verify these values ourselves, i.e. we don't want to assume something just because it is being stated here or written in a book, rather, each one of us will want to verify these to find out whether they are true for us. This has to be done by both checking for validity within ourselves, as being naturally acceptable as well as something which we can implement in our living and observe its outcome to be fulfilling.

All Encompassing

Value education is not merely an academic exercise. It is aimed at transforming our consciousness and living. Hence, it has to permeate into all dimensions of our living, namely, thought, behaviour, work and understanding/realization; as well as all levels, namely, individual, family, society and nature.

Leading to Harmony

Finally, value education has to enable us to be in harmony within and in harmony with others. Hence, when we live on the basis of these values, we start understanding that it will lead to harmony in us, and harmony in our interactions with other humans and the rest of nature.

The Content of Value Education

The value of any unit in this existence is its participation in the larger order of which it is a part e. g. value of a pen is that it can write. Here writing is the participation of the pen in the bigger order

in which pen, paper, human being, all are present. Value of an eye is that it can be used for seeing. Value of a vegetable plant is that it gives nutrition to animals and humans. What is the value of a human being?

This question implies - what is the participation of a human being in the bigger order? That bigger order includes human beings, plants, air, water, soil, animals, birds etc. The value of a human being is the participation of human being in this order. Hence, to understand human values, we need to study the human reality along with all that is there in the existence constituting the larger order, and the role of human being in the relationship with each and every unit in the existence.

Scope of Study

As mentioned above, any course on value education must include

- **All dimensions**- thought, behaviour, work & and realization, and
- **All levels of human living** - individual, family, society, nature/existence of human living.

Accordingly, the content of Value Education will be to understand myself, my aspirations, my happiness; understand the goal of human life comprehensively; understand the other entities in nature, the innate inter-connectedness, the co-existence in the nature/existence and finally the role of human being in this nature/existence entirety. Hence, it has to encompass understanding of harmony at various levels, namely, individual, family, society, nature and existence, and finally, learning to live in accordance with this understanding by being vigilant to one's thought, behaviour and work.

The Process of Value Education

The process of value education has to be ascertained before we proceed. Let us now acquaint ourselves with the process of value education which we are going to adopt. In this course, various aspects of reality facilitating the understanding of human values will be presented as proposals. You need to verify these proposals for yourself and examine your living in this light. Let us see how we can verify these proposals.

1. We will verify these proposals through self-exploration. We shall investigate into these proposals and try to verify within us in our own right.
2. This self-exploration will be done on the basis of whether the proposals are acceptable to us in a natural manner – i.e. they need to be naturally acceptable to us and not just imposed externally.
3. Self-exploration will also include verifying the proposals through experiential validation, i.e. by living according to them. Experiential validation will ascertain that when we live our life on the basis of this education, our living will be fulfilling to us as well as our surroundings.
4. Since the process is of self-exploration, and not of giving sermons or prescribing do's and don'ts, you need not agree to all that is said, but only be ready to investigate into them sincerely. We don't want to just theorize and impose stated truths.
5. This process of self-exploration has to be in the form of a dialogue, a dialogue between the presenter [teachers] and the receivers [students] to begin with; and slowly to translate into

a dialogue within the receiver [students/the reader] himself/herself. Each one of us can conduct this verification within ourselves.

6. This process is expected to initiate a transformation in our understanding in our consciousness and our living.

This process of self-verification needs to be applied to all the proposals. In this way, we will proceed forward, one proposal at a time. Life is a laboratory and we will work on the proposals and verify their truthfulness in ourselves and in our living.

Self-exploration as the Process for Value Education

Normally, we are used to exploring outside. For example: we keep looking around, we observe trees, animals and other human beings. Seldom do we observe "what is going on in me while I am observing outside". Thus, it remains only external observation. When we say we want to self-explore, it means we have to now start observing within ourselves too and not observing just outside

Let's take the example that we are seeing a tree. When I see a tree, here is what is happening: the image of the tree is available on my eyes. From there, the information is passed on to me, and then I say: "I can see a big tree, and it is about 100 meters away and so on". This is an example of observing outside. But when I start to observe what relation I have with the tree or, how the tree does relate to me, it is observing inside.

What is Self-exploration? What is its Purpose?

Let us ponder over the following points to appreciate self-exploration and its purpose.

1. It is a process of dialogue between "what you are" and "what you really want to be".
2. It is a process of self-evolution through self-investigation.
3. It is a process of knowing oneself and through that, knowing the entire existence.
4. It is a process of recognizing one's relationship with every unit in existence and fulfilling it.
5. It is a process of knowing human conduct, human character and living accordingly.
6. It is a process of being in harmony in oneself and in harmony with entire existence.
7. It is a process of identifying our Innateness (Swatva) and moving towards Selforganization (Swatantratã) and Self-expression (Swarãjya).

Now, we will go over the above points in detail.

It is a process of dialogue between "what you are" and "what you really want to be": We will look into ourselves and find out what we are today, and how this contrasts from what we really want to be. If these two are the same, then there is no problem. If on investigation we find that these two are not the same, then it means we are living with this contradiction (of not being what we really want to be) and hence, we need to resolve this contradiction, this conflict within us.

Ask yourself this question: "Am I what I really want to be?"

When we look into this, we find that mostly we are not what we really want to be. These two are different and each one of us is faced with this contradiction. We are something and we want to be something else. This basic dichotomy, this basic contradiction has to be resolved. This dichotomy creates a conflict in us, which is a continuous cause for our unhappiness. What we are today- is the result of our preconditioning, our predispositions, our impressions and our beliefs. What we really want to be- comes from deep within us that is naturally acceptable to us. This is something intact in us. It needs to be explored and found out.

"What I am" ´´ ´´ ´ "What I really want to be".

This dialogue needs to be started - between what you are and what you really want to be. On investigating into it, you will find that the contradictions are not outside of you. These contradictions are inside you. In fact, the contradictions that you see outside are mostly a reflection of the contradictions within. For example, we end up believing many things that are instilled in us since childhood – like "living is basically a struggle for survival". And based on this belief, we plan our whole life. But have we even asked ourselves the question of whether this is the way in which I really want to live? We find that most of the time, we don't even care to know whether the things we have assumed are really true. We are defining our entire lives, all our desires, based on such assumptions, without even knowing whether these assumptions are naturally acceptable to us! This is a serious matter worthy of our attention.

All our unhappiness, all our discomfort, all our unease is because of this contradiction within – between what we are and what we really want to be. Each one of us lives with this feeling of discomfort, the unease within that keeps telling us "something is missing". Each one of us is faced with contradictions and problems in various aspects of life – contradictions within ourselves, in our behaviour with people, in our interactions and thoughts about society, and in our interactions and notions about nature. And irrespective of where you are placed: in a nice school, in a great college, having a good job, having a lot of money etc., this discomfort is continuously present.

On careful self-exploration, we will find that we are being driven by a number of assumptions/ beliefs which are contrary to our natural acceptance and they cause contradiction within us. We have to start looking at these carefully.

Many times, you will find, we want something, we think something else, we say something else, we do something else, and the results of our actions do not match with the expected outcomes! This kind of dichotomy continues to exist in us, resulting in a state of unhappiness and as of today we don't seem to be doing anything at all in order to address these contradictions, whereas it is the basic issue that needs to be resolved.

It is a process of self-evolution through self-investigation: By self-investigation, we shall work towards being what we really want to be. Hence, the self-exploration leads to our own improvement, our own self-evolution – we will become qualitatively better. We can be more in harmony within ourselves.

We saw in the earlier point that it is necessary to find out the contradictions in ourselves, to see that we are in contradiction. Where would we do this? Since the contradictions are in ourselves, it

becomes necessary that we investigate into ourselves to find this out! Hence, it is necessary that we do self-exploration. It is not about exploring outside us, but inside us, in us. We have to start exploring ourselves. Through this process of self-exploration we can achieve self-evolution. This process of self investigation needs to be started. It needs to start in each one of us. Once this dialogue within ourselves has been established, and we start evolving – we become comfortable within ourselves. The very process of being in this dialogue starts facilitating this self-improvement.

It is a process of knowing oneself and through that, knowing the entire existence: Thus, self-exploration leads to us knowing ourselves better. Today, we are largely unaware of our own characteristics, our own assumptions, beliefs and pre-conditionings. We will go beyond these beliefs to know ourselves. Once we have known ourselves, and we are sure of it, we can then also know all the things around us correctly. This way, we can be sure of these things in our own right, we can be authentic about them. We don't have to continue to live merely with assumptions about these things.

Ask yourself: Do I want to know myself? Do I want this self-investigation? Am I satisfied in living my life without having known myself? If I don't know myself, am not sure of myself, how can I be sure of what I want and what I do? – One finds that the need to know ourselves, to understand the self, is an innate need of every human being. This need to know does not have to be instilled from outside, once our attention has been drawn to this fact. Each individual would like to know himself/herself and can carry out this self-exploration and self-evolution.

As we know ourselves correctly, we are also able to relate ourselves correctly to the things around us. We can then understand the people we live with, the family we are born in, the people in society we interact with, in fact all the entities in nature/ existence. Ask yourself this question: Are you satisfied with just knowing the immediate things around you, or do you also get curious about the larger reality around you? Each human being wants to know everything. Once we have known ourselves, we can also know the entire existence. This process starts with the self, and once we are sure of ourselves, we can, through that, also know the entire existence.

If we look at the basic fallacy in our current approach of understanding things around us, it is that we try to understand things around us without first being sure of ourselves. Since we don't know ourselves correctly, and it is we who understand the world, hence, all the pre-conditionings we have within, the contradictions we have within, reflect in our perception of the world, and we start interacting with the external world, with the things around us based on these assumptions, based on these pre-conditionings. Therefore, it is important to know myself first, and when I am sure about myself and that there is no 'colouring' there then, I can know about other things properly. Then, I can be sure about the things I know, since I am sure of myself.

It is a process of recognizing one's relationship with every unit in existence and fulfilling it: Once we start knowing ourselves and everything beside us, we shall understand our relationship with them i.e. we shall understand our relationship with other humans, animals, plants and matter etc. We shall then know how we have to live in harmony with all these things.

What are the things we live with today? We live in our families – without parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, we live in society – we interact with our teachers, with various people engaged in making available goods and services in the society. We live with nature – with animals, birds, plants, insects, materials, etc, and of course, the larger existence – all that space, and all those planets, stars and other entities that are suspended in it.

Do we know our relationship with each one of these entities? Do we know and understand our relationship with our parents? With our teachers? With the person next door? What happens when we do not understand this relationship? You would find that this lack of understanding leads to problems. For example: if you wrongly assume that animals may breathe away all the air, and hence all animals need to be killed so that there is enough oxygen left for human beings, it would be disastrous! We need to start seeing various interactions in which we face problems: for example, the problem of misunderstanding in relationships, the problem of wars and crime in society, the problem of pollution in nature, etc. Are these not due to the lack of right understanding of our relationship at various levels? We find that our problems in our relationship with various entities around us are due to our assuming certain things about these relationships which are not really true. For example: if we assume that mistrust is basic to a human relationship, we shall have problems, since all the time we shall mistrust people we come across, and mistrust is not acceptable to us, not acceptable to any human being!

The fact that we are related to all these entities can easily be observed in our day to day life. We don't have to create these relationships. These relationships are already there. We have assumed something else about these relationships. What is needed for us is to correctly understand our relationship with each of these entities. When we are able to understand this, we are able to fulfil our relationship with them. For example, when we understand that trust is basic to a relationship, that it is trust which is naturally acceptable to every human being, we become at ease and are able to orient ourselves correctly and our relationships becomes mutually fulfilling. Similarly, once we see that we want to be in harmony with nature, that nature itself is in harmony, our interactions with nature lead to mutual prosperity. On the other hand, if we continue to assume that human beings and nature are at loggerheads, then we shall continue to have problems in multiple ways.

Thus, we start with understanding ourselves, and then through ourselves, we understand the rest of existence, and also our relationship with all entities in existence and then fulfil this relationship.

It is a process of knowing human conduct, human character and living accordingly: None of us wants to live with uncertainty. If our state of mind, our own behaviour keeps changing, we are not comfortable with ourselves. We all desire for certainty and stability. Once we know our own true nature, we will also understand what is our participation with the other things we live with – this is the ethical human conduct or the humane conduct. This is what characterizes a human being. When we know this true human character, we start moving towards it in a natural manner.

All the entities in the existence are characterized by their innateness, by their specific characteristics which are invariant. We recognize any entity by this innateness. What is then the innateness of a human being? Is a human being expected to exhibit different characteristics at different times and with different people?

If you ask yourself, whether you want a definite character or indefinite character – what is the answer? The answer is, we all want to have a definite character, a definite conduct. We are not satisfied with having an indefinite conduct, though we are living with indefiniteness. Example: We can't be sure of how we are going to be this very evening! We are not sure what our mood will be tomorrow morning. Sometimes, we are not sure about what mindset we are going to have the next moment! Are we comfortable with this state of affairs? Or do we want a definitiveness in our conduct? Explore.

There is a need to understand this definite conduct in a human being and how it can be ensured.

Once we know, through self-exploration, our own true nature and the things around us, we shall also know what our relationship and participation is with the other things we live with, all the things around us – then we will be able to rightly understand ethical human conduct or the humane conduct. Thus, the process of Self-exploration will enable us to identify the definitiveness of human conduct and to live accordingly.

It is a process of being in harmony in oneself and in harmony with entire existence: Through the process of Self-exploration, I establish a dialogue with my natural acceptance. This enables me to be in harmony within myself. Through the same process, I am able to explore into the harmony in the entire existence. We slowly come to realize (and we will keep talking about this in the entire book) that there is an innate harmony in the existence. I only need to discover this. And once I do this, I can learn to live in harmony with the entire existence. Thus the process of Self-exploration helps me live in harmony within myself and in all my interactions with the world around. Would you desire to be in such a state? Well, we need to work for it.

It is a process of identifying our Innateness (Swatva) and moving towards Selforganization (Swatantratã) and Self-expression (Swarãjya): When I identify my innateness, what I really want to be and establish a dialogue with it, it enables me to become Self-organized, and i.e. I attain harmony in myself. This is Swatantratã. When I start living with this harmony, it starts expressing itself through my harmonious behaviour and work, and it naturally extends to my participation with the surroundings. This is working towards Swarãjya.

- **Swatantratã** : Being self-organized : Being in harmony in oneself
- **Swarãjya :** Self-expression, Self-extension : Living in harmony with others, and thus participation towards harmony in the whole existence

Ask yourself this question: Are you self-organized right now? Are you able to be in harmony with others?

If you are living in contradiction, then it means you are not self-organized. If you are living with pre-conditionings, wherein you have assumed certain things, have accumulated desires without having first evaluated them, then it means you are partantra (enslaved). If you ask this question: whether we are swatantra or partantra, what is the answer? Till there is a difference between what we are and what we really want to be, we are not swatantra, because we will always be in conflict. Hence, since we ourselves are not in self-organization, our expression in living: be it in behaviour

with other humans or in our interaction in the form of work - the outcome is going to be one of conflict.

So, through this process of Self-exploration I begin by identifying my innateness (Swatva), what I really want to be. Then, living accordingly enables me to being in harmony within myself (Swatantratã) and finally being in harmony with the whole existence (Swarãjya).

Content of Self-exploration

In the light of what we have discussed so far, the content of Self-exploration can be visualized in terms of finding answers to the following fundamental questions of all human beings:

1. **Desire**: What is my basic aspiration?
2. **Program**: What is the process to fulfil this basic aspiration?

Do you find these two questions relevant?

We will try to find answers to these questions by exploring within. These are very important questions since everything we do is related to some desire or the other we are trying to fulfil.

This is what any human being would like to know and work towards its actualization in life.

And if you have the answers to these two questions, is there any other question that remains to be answered?

We are going to observe and explore ourselves, our lives, what we do, why we do and how we do. We will study what human beings want, we will study what we really want. We also want to know how to fulfil what we want. We want to explore into what is valuable for us. Each one of us can explore this within ourselves.

Process of Self-exploration

In the sections above, we saw the need and content of Self-exploration. We will now move on, and find out how we will carry this out.

Following points are to be kept in mind regarding this process of Self-exploration.

a. **"Whatever is stated is a proposal".**
b. **Don't start by assuming it to be true or false.**

Whatever we state here, is a proposal. Don't accept it as it is, or assume it to be true. We seem to have assumed many things to be true till now. If we assume what we are discussing here to be true as well, it would only add to our set of assumptions and beliefs and instead of being an aid for us, instead of helping us, it will only end being a burden for us!

Alright! If we don't assume it, how will we verify it?

> **"Verify it on your own right"**

You need to rigorously verify all the statements and proposals being made here in your own right. No one else can do this for you; you have to do it yourself. It has to be self-investigated by you. Verifying in your own right implies the following;

"Don't just accept or reject it

- **on the basis of scriptures**
- **on the basis of instruments**
- **on the basis of others"**

Note: By the above proposal, we are not trying to undermine the importance of scriptures, instruments or the guidance obtainable from wise persons. Not at all! We are only suggesting that one should take all these as valuable proposals worthy of your own serious exploration and then acceptance.

Let us understand these in more detail:

"Don't try to verify on the basis of scriptures/ what is written":

By this we mean, let's not compare what is being proposed here with what is written in some book, something that you have read or are reading i.e. we think we know certain things, because we have read about it somewhere, and remember it now. However, we are not talking about a comparative study between what we have read and what is being proposed here. Rather, we are talking about verification of these proposals directly within yourself.

"Not on the basis of instruments":

Don't assume these proposals as being true or false based on the conclusions somebody might have given after conducting experiments with physical instruments. The instruments only give information about some physical phenomena, but the conclusions we make are based on our own perception about the phenomena. Such perceptions also need to be subjected to self-verification.

"Not on the basis of others":

Again, you may have heard something that some great person has said. You may believe what this person says to be true, and hence end up comparing what is being proposed here with what you remember as being stated by that personality. This would not mean verifying in your own right; it would mean accepting on those great personalities' right!

"Firstly, verify the proposal on the basis of your natural acceptance"

Natural acceptance is a faculty that is present in each one of us. It is intact and invariant. We only have to start paying attention to it, to start "seeing" it. For example, ask yourself this question:

'Is trust naturally acceptable to me in relationship, or is mistrust naturally acceptable?' What is the answer? It turns out that trust is naturally acceptable to you in relationship.

Similarly, ask yourself another question: "Do I want to live in relationship with others or do I want to live in opposition with others?" The answer is - live in relationship with others.

We find that we get the answers from within ourselves and it is spontaneous. The answers are there in us, naturally. We only need to trace them. We call this faculty the natural acceptance.

For every proposal being put forth here, we shall pass it through our own natural acceptance. If it passes through our own natural acceptance, i.e. if it is naturally acceptable to us, it is true for us. If it does not, then it is not true for us and we can drop the proposal. Let's not assume what is being stated here to be true! You need to ensure that you pass every proposal through your own natural acceptance!

Let's ask ourselves another very basic question: Do I want to be happy? The answer is a very quick yes! How did you get this answer? Of course, through your natural acceptance. *This may seem very simple to begin with, but we shall see that this becomes a very powerful way for us to know what is ultimately right!*

Once you start asking the question deep within yourself, you will be able to start accessing these answers yourself. This natural acceptance is there in each one of us, it is what we most spontaneously, most naturally desire. You don't have to import this natural acceptance from outside; you don't have to learn it from somewhere! For example, when you asked the question "whether trust is most acceptable to me in relationship", did you ask anyone else for the answer? Did you read or learn the answer from somewhere? Did you have to refer to some instrument? The answer is NO. This answer came from within you. Similarly, about the answer to- "Is living in relationship with others is naturally acceptable to me". Did you have to learn this from others? Again NO!

Thus, as first part of the self-verification, every proposal being put forth here, is passed through our own natural acceptance.

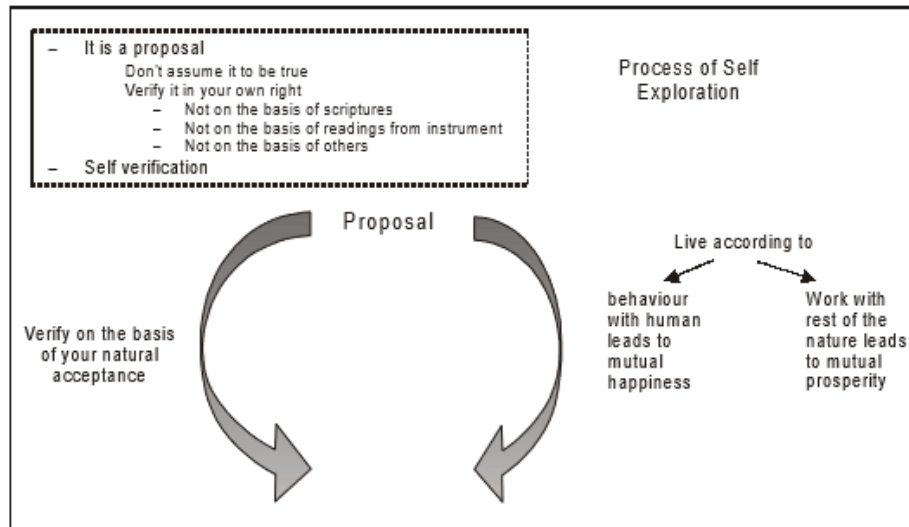**"Secondly, live according to the proposal to validate it experientially."**

To verify the proposals, I need to live accordingly in my interactions with the world around. This involves two things: behaviour and work. If the proposal is true,

- a. In behaviour with other humans,
  - i. it will lead to mutual fulfilment
- b. In work with the rest of nature,
  - i. it will lead to mutual prosperity.

I desire mutual fulfilment in my relations with other humans and mutual prosperity with the rest of nature. This way, I validate the truthfulness of the proposal.

The whole process of self-exploration can be represented as follows:

The whole process of self-exploration can be represented as follows:

```
-  It is a proposal                                      Process of Self
      Don't assume it to be true                            Exploration
      Verify it in your own right
         -  Not on the basis of scriptures
         -  Not on the basis of readings from instrument
         -  Not on the basis of others
-  Self verification
```

Proposal

Live according to

behaviour with human leads to mutual happiness   Work with rest of the nature leads to mutual prosperity

Verify on the basis of your natural acceptance

Natural Acceptance

At this point, we can make the following observations about natural acceptance:

a. **Natural acceptance does not change with time**: The natural acceptance does not change with time. It remains invariant with time. This can be easily verified. For example, our acceptance for trust or respect does not change with age. People hundred years ago also had the same natural acceptance. We can try to verify this within our span of observation.

b. **It does not depend on the place**: Whether we are in New Delhi, New York or Abu Dhabi, if we address our natural acceptance, the answer would still be the same!

c. **It does not depend on our beliefs or past conditionings**: We may be told frequently not to trust people of other religions or castes, but is it naturally acceptable to us? No matter how deep our belief or past conditioning, as long as we ask ourselves the question sincerely, as long as we refer deep within ourselves, the answer will always be the same.

d. **This natural acceptance is 'constantly there', something we can refer to:** Try this yourself: think of cheating or exploiting someone. The moment you think of this, you sense a contradiction within and feel unhappy that very instant! It happens very quickly, and we may not notice it, but it does happen! Similarly, the moment we think of disrespecting someone, we become unhappy. The very thought is enough to cause a conflict, a strain within us. Thus, this natural acceptance is always there, and if we start paying attention to it, if we ask ourselves every time, for every thought and every desire we have, "Is this naturally acceptable to me?", we will get an answer. Whatever we do, this natural acceptance is within us, it is telling us what is right. Every time we do something not readily acceptable to us. i.e. every time we think or do something not acceptable to us, there is a contradiction in us, because the thought/ deed conflicts with our own natural acceptance! The moment we think of cheating, we become unhappy. We don't even have to carry out the action. It will become clear to us that while we want something else at the level of our natural

acceptance, we think or do something else, based on our beliefs and preconditioning, which is contrary, it creates a disharmony in us; this is the cause for our unhappiness. Take for example, one may proceed with the act of cheating under the influence of say, an extraneous pressure but one keeps feeling unhappy about it and may even repent over this act in the course of time. If somebody asks, 'why do you cheat?', one starts offering explanations, inventing justifications. This is because it is naturally unacceptable.

e. **Natural acceptance is the same for all of us**: it is part and parcel of every human being, it is part of human-ness: Let's start exploring into this. We will find that no human being finds disrespect acceptable in relationship. No matter who the person, however bad or good, one always expects respect in relationship. For example, let us say a person 'A' disrespects 'B'. This man 'B' may bear a grudge against 'A' and set out to "teach him a lesson". This is because 'B' does not find disrespect acceptable and when he does not get respect, it offends him. This may actually end up leading to a large scale conflict!

We can start checking and verifying this for ourselves. All of us have acceptance which are same, at a very deep and basic level. Our assumptions and choices, our likes and dislikes may be different, but on some very basic and common issues like need for happiness, trust, respect, prosperity, we are all the same, all of us have the same basic acceptance.

Thus,

Natural acceptance is there in all of us. It is within us, all the time and we can refer to it, access it to know what is right for us. We only have to start referring to it. Each proposal in this book needs to be evaluated on the basis of your natural acceptance.

What is the State Today?

Today, we are not oriented enough to evaluate our beliefs or assumptions and we treat them as our personal domain. We generally keep them secure in the name of personal life and freedom. We usually become very sticky about them without really varifying them. When these come in conflict, we try hard to search out justifications and make all efforts to defend our own assumptions. In the process, we cheat ourselves as well as others. But are our assumptions not taxing for us? Are these not costing us our own happiness, the stability and cordiality in our relations? These definitely are, and we need to focus attention on these.

Since we don't verify within ourselves, we continue to live with a set of assumptions and beliefs which may or may not be true. Hence, we are usually not sure of what we 'believe' since we have largely assumed these things and have not verified them for ourselves.

Since we do not verify it in our living with people and with nature, we are not sure of what the results are. In fact, this is quite obvious, since we find today that while sometimes we may have fulfilling relationships with people, may a time we don't; sometimes we contribute to enriching nature but, mostly we end up exploiting it. It shows that today:

- Neither are we verifying our assumptions/ proposals put to us on the basis of our natural acceptance,
- Nor are we verifying what we think we know, in our living!

What is the Way Out? What do we Need to Do?

We have to start verifying our assumptions, beliefs on the basis of our natural acceptance and experiential validation. Living on the basis of natural acceptance makes us more authentic. As long as we are living on the basis of assumptions, there is no authenticity in what we are thinking, no authenticity in what we are doing. Since we have not verified for ourselves, in our own right, we don't have the confidence about things. Ultimately, we are the judge of what is right for us, we have to verify and understand it.
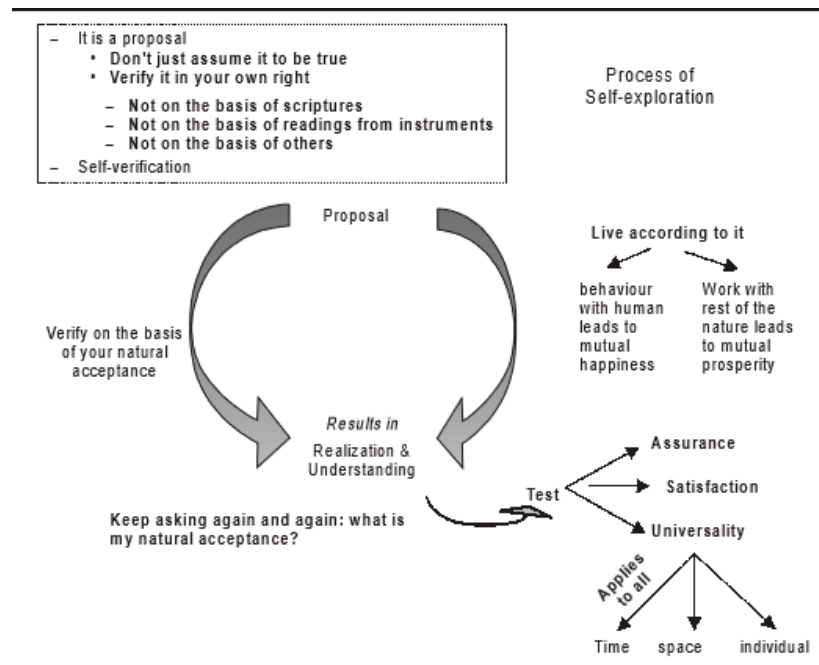
Realization and Understanding

We saw earlier that the process of Self-exploration involves two steps:

> 1. Verification of the proposals on the basis of our natural acceptance
> 2. Experiential validation by living according to it.

As we do this, as we continue with this process of verification of the proposals stated here on the basis of our natural acceptance and test it out in our living, it ultimately results in "realization" and "understanding" in us. This means, knowing something to be "true", for sure, within ourselves.

The realization and understanding is denoted below:

Accordingly, the complete process of self-exploration can be depicted as below.

The answers we get on having realization & understanding are:

a. **Assuring**: "I am assured of the answer or understanding in myself"
b. **Satisfying**: "I am satisfied that the answers are fulfilling for me.
c. **Universal**: "I know or realize that the answers I have got are the same for everyone. They are invariant with respect to:
    i. *Time*: These answers are the same at all times: past, present and future
    ii. *Space*: These answers are the same at all places or locations
    iii. *Individual*: The answers are the same for every human being

If the answers we get do not fulfil any of the criteria of being assuring, satisfying and universal; it means the answer is most likely coming from your past beliefs/conditioning and not from your natural acceptance. Hence, you need to re-verify the answer!

Let us not accept the proposals stated here because they are being repeated all the time! Far from it! Each one of us needs to start asking ourselves these questions and see what is acceptable to us! You have to start asking these questions yourself!

[This process of repeated self-verification of the proposals on the basis of my own natural acceptance and validating it experientially, and also testing the answers for assurance, satisfaction and universality ultimately results in what is called "Realization" and "Understanding". When we have this realization and understanding, when we have this knowledge, it remains intact i.e. it stays with us at all times and is not moved or disturbed by external circumstances. In fact, it also starts expressing itself, in the most natural manner and starts impacting the environment and since it is true, it is readily acceptable to others too.]

For the remainder of this book, we will explore into these two basic questions

Desire: What is my basic aspiration?

Program: What is the process of fulfilling this basic aspiration?

The Basic Human Aspirations - Continuous Happiness and Prosperity

There are two basic aspirations of every human being: continuous happiness and prosperity. These are at the root of all our aspirations and the efforts that go towards achieving these.

Happiness

Happiness as

"The state/situation in which I live, if there is **harmony/synergy** in it, then I like to be in that state or situation."

i.e. "To be in a state of liking is happiness."

"The state/situation in which I live, if there is **conflict/contradiction** in it, then I do not like to be in that state or situation."

i.e. "To be in a state of disliking is unhappiness"

Thus, we can define happiness and unhappiness as

"**To be in a state of harmony is happiness**."

"To be in a state of disharmony or contradiction is unhappiness"

Prosperity

Prosperity: is the feeling of having or making available more than required physical facilities.

To ascertain prosperity, two things are essential:

a. Correct assessment of need for physical facilities, and
b. The competence of making available more than required physical facilities (through production).

The **difference between wealth and prosperity**

a. **Wealth** is a physical thing. It means having money, or having a lot of physical facilities, or both.
b. **Prosperity** is a feeling of having more than required. Prosperity is a feeling of having more than required physical facilities; it is not just physical facilities.

Understanding Happiness and Prosperity correctly – A critical appraisal of the current scenario

In the current scenario, we are generally trying to achieve happiness and prosperity by maximizing accumulation and consumption of physical facilities.

Some of the consequences of such a trend are summarised below:

a. **At the level of the individual** – rising problems of depression, psychological disorders, suicides, stress, insecurity, psycho-somatic diseases, loneliness etc.
b. **At the level of the family** – breaking of joint families, mistrust, conflict between older and younger generations, insecurity in relationships, divorce, dowry tortures, family feuds, wasteful expenditure in family functions etc.
c. **At the level of the Society** – growing incidences of terrorism and naxalism, rising communalism, spreading casteism, racial and ethnic struggle, wars between nations, attempts of genocide, fear of nuclear and genetic warfare, etc.
d. **At the level of nature** – global warming, water, air, soil, noise, etc. pollution, resource depletion of minerals and mineral oils, sizeable deforestations, loss of fertility of soil.

It therefore, calls for an urgent need for human beings to correctly understand happiness and prosperity as well as the sustainable way to achieve these.

Why Are We in This State?

This is a significant point for us, since our basic desire is happiness and prosperity and its continuity, but on investigation, we find that our current state is quite unlike it!

Currently we are facing problems at every level

Why this is so?

Due to lack of right understanding

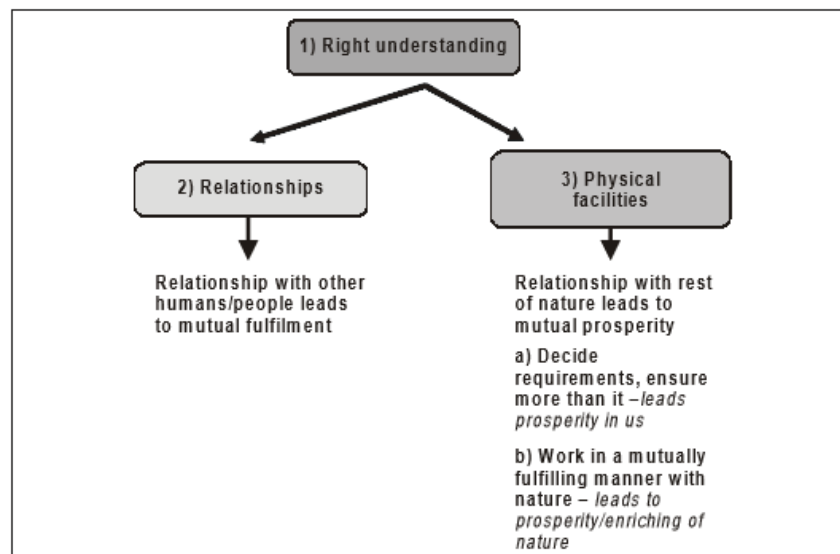**What is the Solution? - The Need for Right Understanding**

As long as we live with wrong assumptions we shall continue to have the problems in ourselves and have problems in relationship, not feel happy or prosperous and will exploit nature".

In order to resolve the issues in human relationships, we need to understand them first, and this would come from 'right understanding' of relationship.

Similarly, in order to be prosperous and to enrich nature, we need to have the 'right understanding'.

There is need for us to have the 'right understanding' so we can be sure of our own selves, our relationships and our need for physical facilities.

Thus, the three basic requirements to ensure happiness and prosperity for human beings are:

All three are needed. We can't do away with anyone of them.

We need all three, with the **priority of**

We need to work for [1] Right understanding as the basis on which we can work for [2] Relationships, and then [3] Physical facilities!

Kinds of people in the world

Today, we can see that there are two kinds of people in the world:

1. Those that do not have physical facilities/wealth and feel unhappy and deprived
    a. Thus, such people can be said to be 'materially deficient, unhappy and deprived' or '**Sādhan Viheen Dukhi Daridra'**
    b. The short form for this can be written as: **SVDD**!
2. Those that have physical facilities/wealth and feel unhappy and deprived!

a. Thus, such people can be said to be 'materially affluent, but unhappy and deprived' or '**Sãdhan Sampann Dukhi Daridra'**

b. The short form for this can be written as: **SSDD**!

Check, where do you stand- at (1) or (2)

Both these are states we don't want to be in! We want to move from this to (verify this)

3. Having physical facilities and feeling happy and prosperous.

a. Such people can be said to be materially affluent, happy and prosperous or '**Sãdhan Sampann Sukhi Samridh**'

b. The short form for this can be written as: **SSSS!**

To ensure that we are of the 3rd category as described above, we need the right understanding!

Thus, we can conclude the following: We need to work for all three, and this is the order in which we have to work:

1. Right Understanding
2. Relationship
3. Physical facilities

Working with this order, we are able to ensure mutual fulfilment with human beings and mutual prosperity with the rest of nature.

Right understanding + Relationship = Mutual fulfilment

Right understanding + Physical facilities = Mutual prosperity

Our Program: Understand and Live in Harmony at All levels of Living

If we have the 'right understanding', then we can be happy in ourselves and work to, have fulfilling relationships with humans and mutual prosperity with nature.

We need the Right Understanding in all 'levels of our living'

1. living in myself
2. living in family
3. living in society
4. living in nature/existence

Let us now explore these different levels of our living:

1. **Living in Myself**: We all have desires, thoughts, beliefs, imaginations and choices. This is the first level of our living. Before expressing ourselves in relations, we think, and whatever we receive from the other, it again passes through our internal processes. We refer to this as (our) self. This inner world (or 'myself') co-exists with the body and together we refer to this as a 'human being'.
Most of the time, we see that we are busy in ourselves – making some plans, thinking about doing something, etc. We have to start with ourselves and study ourselves. This means to put effort to understand our own desires, our wants, and our behaviour. So far, we have ended up assuming things without really investigating into ourselves. We have read a lot

of books, we have gone through years of silent and subtle conditioning about who we are, what we want and how we should behave, what work we should do, in short, 'how to live!' We have to begin 'knowing' ourselves and test our beliefs by passing them through our own natural acceptance.

2. **Living in Family**: All of us are born to our parents and this is the family we are born to. This is the first web of relationships for each one of us and subsequently we live in more relationships that include our siblings, our friends and classmates, teachers and others. These are the people we live with on a daily basis, and we call this 'family'.

   How I see myself, decides how I see the other and my relationship with another human, another person. If I can understand myself better and clearer, I am able to see the other clearer and better. And this understanding becomes the basis of my relationship with the other. When we understand ourselves, we can understand the other and this forms the basis of the relationship, harmony with the other. In order to ensure harmony in family and society, we need to understand the expectations in human relationships and whether they can be fulfilled.

3. **Living in Society**: Our family is part of a larger group of people we live with where there are interdependencies around food, clothing, housing, services, health, education, justice etc. We live as a part of this human system. This is our society.

   As we understand ourselves and our relationship with others in family, we also understand the other in society, and are able to fulfil our relationship with them.

4. **Living in Nature/Existence**: We are on this earth: with the grass, plants and trees, birds, animals and other humans surrounding us and we live in this large eco-system that we call nature. Regardless of where we are, our village, town or city, is within this eco-system or natural habitat. Our planet is surrounded by a larger system of planetary bodies and that includes the moon, the sun and the infinite stars and planetary systems that surround us. Our earth is a part of the solar system that co-exists with all that there is in this entire 'existence'. And then there is space between planets, even between you and the book right now! All these things present in space are together called as existence. 'Existence' means all that exists.

When we understand nature, we are able to engage with it in a relationship that leads to mutual fulfilment.

In order to have happiness and ensure its continuity, we need to ensure harmony in all states/situations we live in, which means we need to understand all these four levels of our living! If we ignore any of these levels, the continuity of happiness at that level cannot be ensured!!

Thus, **right understanding** means understanding the harmony at all these four levels of our living!

We can thus write down our program as:

Our Program:

To understand and
To live in harmony   } at all 4 levels of
                        our living

Levels of our Living
(1) Myself
(2) Family
(3) Society
(4) Nature/Existence

When we investigate into each of these levels, we shall find that there is a harmony, a synergy that exists between and at each one of these levels. There is a relationship between us and the totality and this needs to be understood – this leads to assurance in us.

We will further see that this harmony already exists; we don't have to create it. We only have to understand it to be in harmony.

Desire: What is my basic aspiration?

– Continuous happiness and prosperity

Program: What is the process of fulfilling this basic aspiration?

– Understanding and being in harmony at all levels of my living (myself, family, society and nature/existence