CENTRE FOR INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS

उन्मेष

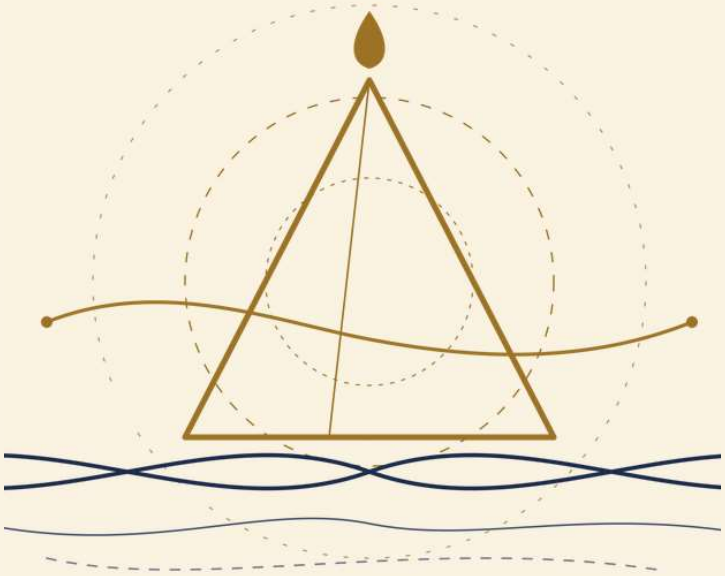
FORE SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT
NEW DELHI | GURUGRAM

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M A N T H A N

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churning timeless ideas into modern wisdom



Volume 01 . July, 2026

Theme of the Month

विनम्रता

HUMILITY

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



Welcome to Manthan, the monthly newsletter of Unmesh- Centre for Indian Knowledge Systems (CIKS). Rooted in India's timeless wisdom and aligned with modern management needs, Unmesh aims to bridge tradition with contemporary business thought. Through this compendium, we aim to create a space for reflection, dialogue, and continuous learning, which includes sharing insights, ideas, and initiatives that inspire responsible, value-driven leadership.

At the heart of our journey lie these eight pillars: E-Books & Digital Library, Lecture Series, Healthcare & Wellness, Culture & Heritage, Literature & Epics, MBA Integration, Research & Publications, and the Annual Conclave. Together, these pillars foster holistic development by connecting Indic knowledge with academic excellence, industry relevance, and ethical leadership.

Our theme for this month, Humility, reminds us that true leadership begins with the willingness to learn, listen, and grow. In embracing humility, we cultivate wisdom, strengthen collaboration, and create lasting impact. We hope this edition encourages meaningful reflection and inspires you to carry these values into your personal and professional journey.

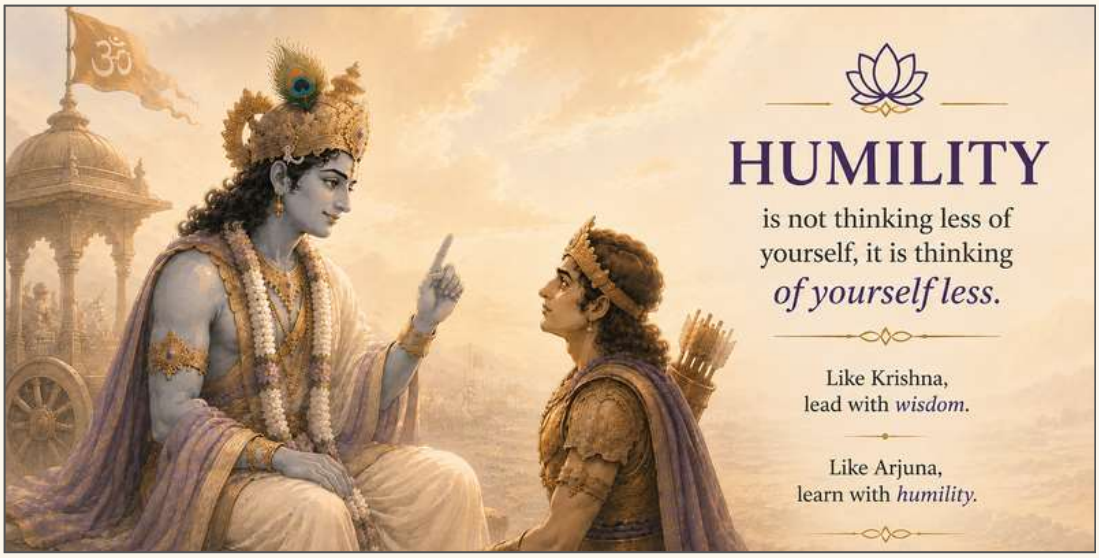
- Prof. Vandana Gupta

Chair
उन्मेष -Centre for Indian
Knowledge System

विनम्रता

Humility

The Hallmark of Great Leadership



Indian Knowledge Systems view humility (Vinamrata) as a strength, not a weakness. Ancient texts such as the Bhagavad Gita and Chanakya Niti describe humility as the foundation of wisdom, self-awareness, and continuous learning. A humble leader acknowledges that knowledge is limitless and remains open to feedback, collaboration, and growth.

Management Takeaway

In today's dynamic business environment, the most effective leaders are not those who know everything, but those who are willing to learn from everyone. Humility fosters trust, strengthens teamwork, and encourages innovation by creating a culture where every voice is valued. It enables leaders to admit mistakes, appreciate diverse perspectives, and make decisions that prioritise collective success over personal recognition.

"True leadership begins with the courage to listen, learn, and lead with humility."

यस्यामतं तस्य मतं मतं यस्य न वेद सः ।
अविज्ञातं विजानतां विज्ञातमविजानताम् ॥

- द्वित्तीय खंड,केनोपनिषद

Yasyāmatam tasya matam, matam yasya na veda saḥ;
Avijñātam vijānatām, vijñātam avijānatām.

- Chapter 2, Kena Upanishad

"The one who thinks they know, does not truly know. The one who realises how much remains unknown is closer to wisdom."

There comes a point in every learning journey when we realize that the more we know, the more there is left to discover.

This verse from the Kena Upanishad captures that feeling beautifully. It tells us that wisdom is not about having all the answers. In fact, the person who is convinced that they know everything may have stopped learning altogether. On the other hand, the person who remains curious, asks questions, and is comfortable saying "I don't know" is often the one who grows the most.

Humility is not about doubting yourself or downplaying your achievements. It is about recognizing that every person, every experience, and every conversation has something to teach us.

The moment we let go of the need to always be right, we create space for learning.

Perhaps that is why truly knowledgeable people often appear the most humble they understand how vast the world of knowledge really is.

In management, it's easy to assume that a leader must always have the perfect answer. But some of the best leaders are simply the best learners.

A manager who listens before speaking, welcomes different viewpoints, and is willing to admit mistakes builds trust within the team. Such leaders make people feel heard and valued.

The Upanishadic lesson is timeless: leadership is not about knowing everything; it is about remaining open to learning from everyone.

The Legendary "Damascus" Swords Were Powered by Ancient Indian Nanotechnology



Damascus knife. Photo by TamorlanCC BY-SA 3.0

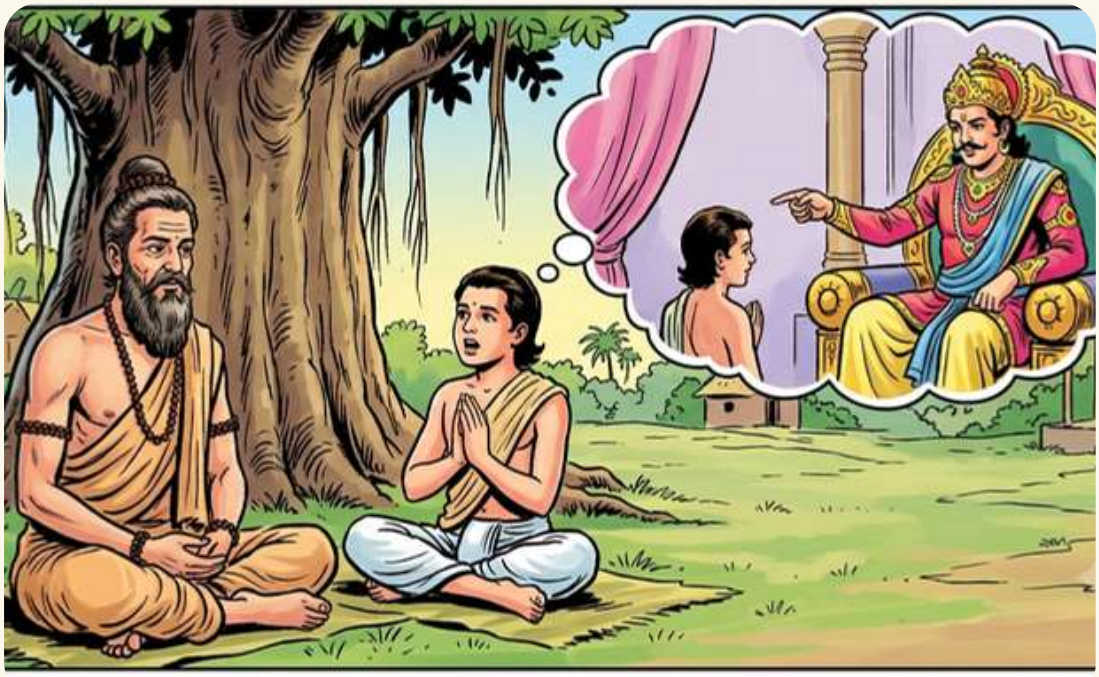
For centuries, the legendary "Damascus" swords were feared by European crusaders and revered for their distinctive watery patterns and unparalleled sharpness. However, the secret behind these famous Middle Eastern blades actually originated thousands of miles away in ancient India.

In South India, specifically in areas now part of modern-day states Tamil Nadu and Karnataka dating back at least to the 6th century B.C., metalworkers developed a highly advanced method of producing Wootz Steel called Closed-Crucible Smelting. This method allowed them to produce steel with levels of carbon never seen before.

Since the middle-eastern blacksmiths were unable to reproduce Wootz, they relied heavily upon international trade routes. They imported large amounts of Wootz ingots from India to create their weapons. So much so that in the 9th century, the Arab scholar Al-Kindi openly praised Hinduwani (Indian) steel as being the best in all of the world. As soon as the British began disrupting Indian smelting operations during the 19th century and the importation of Wootz ceased, the middle-eastern blacksmiths were no longer able to manufacture Damascus Swords.

It is one thing to say that the Indians used some form of knowledge system to develop the strength and sharpness of their steel, however the extent of that use is truly astonishing.

The Deficit of *Sankalpa* : Ancient Wisdom for Modern Leaders



In the boardrooms and team meetings around the globe, the engagement gap is a riddle that confounds leaders. The problem of handling GenZ, the generational rifts, and the declining productivity are the issues that we often discuss. We initiate fresh planning, make strategies, take up SMART goals, and spend money on the latest cutting-edge technology, but the distance between our plans and their realisation is still there.

According to the Upanishads, the human action is a deeply complex matter and the scriptures provide a clear hierarchy of concepts: It distinguishes a line of causality, whereby *Chitta* (consciousness) produces *Iccha* (desire/ *Kama*) the function of *icchashakti* , and from there *Sankalpa* (resolve) the function of *jnanashakti* comes. Finally, comes the *Karma* (actions) , the function of kriyashakti, which is the direct translation of the *Sankalpa*. The effectiveness of our actions, hence the results, depend on how strong our *Sankalpa* is.When there is a weak will, we find ourselves stuck in a "fantasy loop". Desires take the lead but resolve keeps weakening. We comfort ourselves with intentions, "I'll definitely work on this when I am less busy, " "We'll launch that project when the market is right", we postpone the action or perform it half-heartedly. This is not a failure of competence or a shortage of resources, it

is a crisis of will. This lack is not only visible in the junior workforce but also among leaders who have been there for a long time and, despite having resources and authority, are very likely to avoid, justify, or deflect criticism that is necessary for their self-growth. The most important and hardest step for them is acknowledgement. It requires not only a completely honest acceptance of our own flaws but also a readiness to confront critical feedback.

In the *Chandogya* Upanishad, an interaction is recorded between *Uddalaka* Aruni and his son, *Shvetaketu*. When *Shvetaketu* posed five questions that had been asked of him by the king, *Uddalaka* could not answer them. Instead of getting angry or dismissing his son's perspective, *Uddalaka* acknowledged the questions and sought that divine knowledge from the king himself. *Uddalaka* did not simply react in the spur of the moment; he respected the critical viewpoint of his . son, who was junior to him in both status and knowledge. He was neither blinded by his own ego nor made insecure by his lack of knowledge. These are the hallmark traits of a true leader with a strong will, qualities that grant the strength to welcome challenges to one's own perceptions and to accept one's own shortcomings.

In the current corporate scenario, this lesson is more relevant than ever. When leaders demonstrate a powerful will by acknowledging their shortcomings, it becomes contagious. But this will not be cultivated in a vacuum. It requires the leader to first embrace the role of a learner, just as Uddalaka did, creating a culture where feedback is a gift, not a threat. The Upanishadic lens reminds us that it is not about thought, capability or even strategy it is about strong will

- Nayan Kotnala
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UNDERSTANDING UNMESH

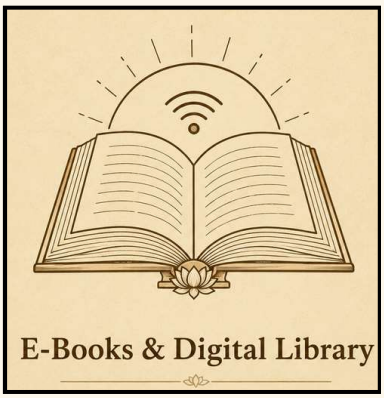
The establishment of a Centre for Indian Knowledge Systems represents a strategic academic initiative aligned with national policy priorities and evolving leadership needs. By integrating India's intellectual heritage with contemporary management education, the Centre seeks to institutionalize the study, interpretation, and application of IKS within management education in a structured and academically rigorous manner, which will contribute to academic innovation, responsible leadership development, and institution-building grounded in ethical and sustainable principles.

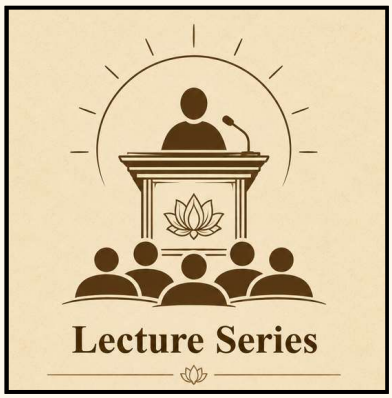
Vision and mission statements are like dead letters until they are energised by the power of Sankalpa, which is the force that moves them into Kriya. Thus, leadership is the power of will that converts potential into action and not the possession of resources. This is valid at every level from the first line supervisor to the CEO. When leaders are the epitome of strong Sankalpa, it makes their employees so energised that they can emancipate themselves from the state of indecision, substitute fantasy by focus, and attain the greatest results through decisive actions.

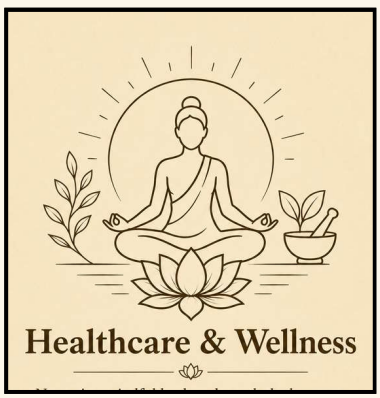
Vision: To be a leading institution that combines Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) with modern management, encouraging ethical, sustainable, and relevant business leadership.

Mission: To foster curriculum innovation, research, and industry engagement rooted in Indian Knowledge Systems, fostering a "Dharma-based" approach to business and governance.

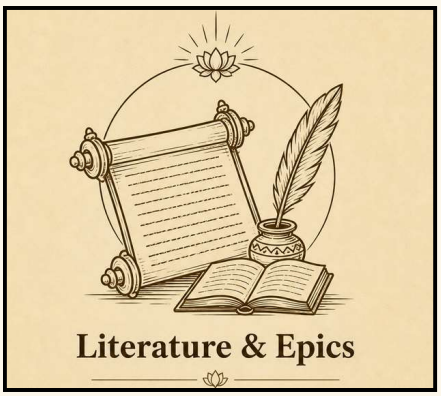
EIGHT PILLARS OF UNMESH

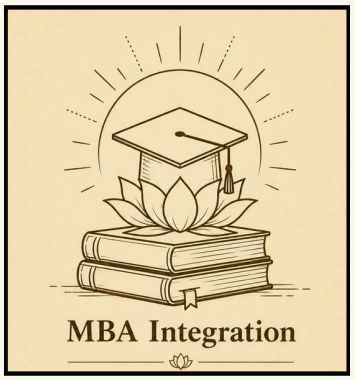
















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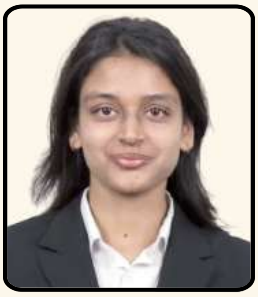
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Did You Know?

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