

Generally speaking, the word 'jnana' means knowledge. In Hinduism the word has many connotations.

Knowledge is viewed by the Hindu scriptures as both liberating and binding. Knowledge is viewed as the means to achieve certain ends. It can be used to fulfill our desires or liberate ourselves from the cycle of births and deaths.

The knowledge that helps us realize our selfish desires and perpetuate our limited identities is considered lower knowledge. It is also termed as avidya or ignorance. The knowledge that helps us overcome our egoistic attitude and desires and realize who we are is considered higher knowledge or the real knowledge.

path of knowledge, the path of action and the path of devotion. There are other paths, but these three are important and effective. While the path of devotion is described as superior to the other two, jnana yoga is suitable for people who are deeply intellectual. On the path of liberation it is important to possess right knowledge, which comes through the study of the scripture and helps us understand the significance of other yogas such as karma yoga, sanyasa yoga, buddhi yoga, atma samyama yoga, and bhakti yoga.

Real knowledge liberates us from the three impurities of human existence, namely egoism, desire ridden actions and the illusion that we are different from the rest of the world and that the objective reality which we experience through our senses is real and permanent.

Jnana yoga is therefore the pursuit of true knowledge by learning how to control our minds and senses and center ourselves in our spiritual selves so that we can become free from our bondage to the cycle of the births and deaths and achieve liberation. The Bhagavadgita identifies jnana yoga as one of the three main paths to liberation, the path of knowledge, the path of action

and the path of devotion. The ...

The purpose of jnana yoga is to achieve liberation by realizing our true nature, overcoming our ignorance and transcending our limited selves, which are sense dependent and bound by karma. According to the Bhagavadgita, following are some of the developments that we experience when we practice jnana yoga.

1. Equanimity of the mind (sthithadhi) through control of the senses and desires and mental discipline.
2. Detachment (asangatva)
3. Impassion (virag)
4. Tyaga (sacrifice)
5. Renunciation (sanyasa)
6. Self-control (samyama).