

Knowledge (Jñānam)

We generally think that learning what we do not know is knowledge. But the word "knowledge" has many meanings. And the word "jñānam" is used in many contexts with many different senses.

"Padānāmanekyārthā dhātūnāmanekyārthā"

Words and roots (dhātus) have many meanings. To grasp which word, in which context, was used for what purpose — linguistic scholarship alone is not sufficient. That can only be determined through the experience of great sages (mahārṣis) who are experienced knowers. For this reason, Vedānta — which is verifiable only through experience — is being distorted by those who are merely scholars of language but lack experience, and its true meaning is being corrupted. Therefore, every word must be explained both in its literal/common meaning (vācyārtha) and in its implied/special meaning (lakṣyārtha).

Example: Knowledge means "to know." Know what? Who knows? If truly two objects exist, these two contexts may arise. If it is understood that there is only one object, then knowledge — the need to bridge the knower (jñātā) and the knowable (jñeyam) — would not exist at all. That is, since all three of these are one and the same, what is the meaning of knowledge here? That is — there being nothing to know (lakṣyārtha, viśeṣārtha) — then whatever you think you know is all ignorance (ajñānam). Then the literal meaning (vācyārtha) and the implied meaning (lakṣyārtha) become different. Therefore, the word "jñāna" as used in the scriptures — grasping its meaning and context, understanding what experience it points to — only those who have that experience can speak of it. This is called bhāṣya (commentary). All other things are merely vyākhyāna (explanation).

"Yogāt sañjāyate jñānam" — (Trisikhi Brāhmaṇopaniṣat) — Since it is said that knowledge arises from yoga, only yogis can explain what "jñānam" means.

"Na hi jñānena sadṛśam pavitram iha vidyate / Tat svayaṃ yogasaṃsiddhaḥ kālenātmani vindati" — (Bhagavad Gītā 4:38)

"Satyaṃ jñānaṃ anantaṃ brahma" — (Taittirīyopaniṣat 2.1.1)

Brahman itself is to be called Satya (truth), Jñāna (knowledge), and Ananta (infinite).

"Brahmaiva satya śabdārtha satyaṃ jñānamiti śruteh" — (Śruti)

In the Śrutis (scriptures), the meaning of the word Satya is declared to be: Brahman is Satya, and that Satya is Jñānam. Therefore, whatever is eternal, whatever is truth — that alone is knowledge, that alone is Brahman. Brahman itself is knowledge; knowing Brahman as something separate is not knowledge — that is ignorance (ajñānam). Nevertheless, the sādḥaka (spiritual aspirant) must examine even this ajñānam in order to cultivate sharpness of intellect (buddhikuśalatā). Therefore: what can be spoken of is jñānam; what cannot be spoken of is ajñānam. Again, in this very statement we use both the words jñāna and ajñāna. Let us now discuss both these words with their distinction.

"Caitanyaṃ vinā kiñcinā — sthīti sākṣātkāra — anubhavam jñānam / Nānātma bhedalpita jñānamajñānam" — (Nirālambopaniṣat 7)

Experiencing that nothing exists, even slightly, without Consciousness — that is jñānam. Whatever imagines that very Consciousness to be divided into many different things — that is ajñānam. Even though that experience cannot be fully expressed outwardly, any description that leads toward oneness (ekatva) can be called jñānam.

"Mattah parataram nānyat kiñcidasti dhanañjaya / Mayi sarvamidam protaṃ sūtre mañiganā iva" — (Bhagavad Gītā 7:7)

To say "there is nothing even slightly beyond Me" is jñānam; and to imagine that this entire created world is strung in Me like beads on a string (viewing from Prakṛti's perspective — that things are "separate") is ajñānam.

"Sarvabhūteṣu yenaikaṃ bhāvamavyayamīkṣate / Avibhaktaṃ vibhakteṣu tajjñānaṃ viddhi sāttvikam" — (Bhagavad Gītā 18:20)

"Pṛthaktvena tu yadyajjñānaṃ nānābhāvān pṛthagvidhān / Vetti sarveṣu bhūteṣu tajjñānaṃ viddhi rājasam" — (Bhagavad Gītā 18:21)

The understanding that sees all the many appearing living beings as one, as undivided — that is sāttvik jñānam. The knowledge that sees all beings as separate, with an external gaze — that is called rājasa jñānam. In other words, they call it ajñānam. Knowledge seen with an external gaze is called "ajñānam"; knowledge seen with an internal gaze (antar-dṛṣṭi) is called "jñānam."

"Bahirmukhaṃ paśyati dṛśyajātam / Antarmukhaṃ paśyati cit svarūpam" — (Kamalāgamam)

Therefore, bahirmukha (outward-facing) itself is ajñānam. Antarmukha (inward-facing) itself is jñānam. That is — one and the same reality appears as jñānam when facing inward, and as ajñānam when facing outward.

"Marubhūmau jalaṃ sarvaṃ marubhūmātra eva tat / Jagattrayaṃ idaṃ sarvaṃ cinmātraṃ suvicāratah" — (Varāhopaniṣat 2:6)

Just as water appears in a desert (mirage) but that is only the desert — not water at all — similarly, the three worlds of waking (jāgrat), dream (svapna), and deep sleep (suṣupti), which appear as three states, are — upon careful examination — nothing but pure Consciousness (caitanya). Similarly:

Like the rope-serpent analogy (rajju-sarpa nyāyam): what appears as a snake is only a rope.

Like the post-man analogy (sthāṇu-puruṣa nyāyam): what appears as a man is only a post.

Like the hare-horn analogy (śāśa-viṣāṇa nyāyam): what appears as horns on a hare are only its ears.

These appear so because of insufficient light. Insufficiency of light is what causes this illusion — that is ajñānam. When there is sufficient light, the illusion disappears. That is, the imagined illusion vanishes, and what truly exists becomes visible as truth. From this we understand: light itself is jñānam, darkness (obscuring light) is ajñānam. If we view light in its form as energy — Energy is light, Light is knowledge. Energy arises through friction. Without friction there is no energy. What generates energy through friction is yoga. Through energy (light) — knowledge — light is born, and the dissolution of illusion (bhrama) is jñānam. That which generates energy is yogam. That energy or light which dissolves delusion is knowledge (Jñānam). Therefore, as the spiritual energy (ādhyātmika śakti) increases — through the growth of jñānam — the visible illusion born of ajñānam begins to melt away. In the end, only light remains.

"Jñānena tu tadajñānaṃ yeṣāṃ nāśitamātmanaḥ / Teṣāmādityavat jñānaṃ prakāśayati tatparam" — (Bhagavad Gītā 5:16)

When the ajñānam within us is removed by jñānam, the knowledge that remains shines like the ever-luminous sun. With that knowledge alone, one can know oneself.

"Akalpita majjaṃ jñānaṃ jñeyādabhinnaṃ pracakṣate / Brahma jñeyam ajaṃ nityaṃ ajena'jaṃ vibudhyate" — (Māṇḍūkya Gauḍapādakārikā 33)

This sunlike light is not imagined (kalpita). It is unborn (ajaṃ). It is not different from the knowable Brahman. Through these uncreated, birthless rays of light, one can know the uncreated, birthless Brahman.

By saying "akalpita jñānam" (uncreated knowledge), we understand that there exists a kalpita jñānam (imagined/constructed knowledge), and that removing it is one's duty.

"Prajñāyāṃ kalpitaṃ prajña, prajñayaiva vihāya / Yat prajñāmātreṇa santiṣṭhet, prajñāvānīritaṃ" — (Śruti)

Even among the forms of knowledge, there is such a thing as imagined knowledge (kalpita jñānam). Whoever abandons such imagined prajñā — they remain as the uncreated, natural, self-luminous (svayaṃjyoti) essence. Such a person is called a prajñāvān. This is the meaning of the Vedic mahāvākya: "Prajñānam Brahma."

"Ātma anātmākāraṃ svabhāvadavasthitaṃ sadā cittam / Ātmanvākāratayā anātmadr̥ṣṭiṃ vidadīta" — (Śrī Śaṅkara's commentary on Brahmasūtram)

Our mind (citta) by nature contains both ātmākāra (the form of the Self) and anātmākāra (the form of the non-Self). If the anātmākāra is abandoned, only the ātmākāra remains.

In this regard, our Gurudeva (teacher) was heard to say: "Mind is both matter and immatter too." That is, the mind contains a Material part (anātmākāra) and a Spiritual part (ātmākāra). The mind is nourished by food (āhāra). Therefore, if food is withheld, the mind becomes weakened. But the Ātman does not weaken or perish. As we take proper food and, using that energy for yogic practice, we burn away the Material (anātmākāra) within the mind — the Spiritual part (ātmākāra) remains. This is "akalpita svayaṃjyoti" (uncreated self-luminance).

In muddy water, both clean water and mud are mixed together. To obtain the clean water within it, we need not do anything special. All our effort is only to remove the mud. But to remove this mud, another kind of mud — indigo liquid (nīla) — must be added to that muddy water. Then the mud sinks to the bottom, and clean water remains. Even so, the indigo liquid we added will float on top of the clean water for a while. Only after it too sinks will the clean water become drinkable. Therefore, to remove the imagined knowledge (kalpita jñānam — the visible/dṛśya awareness, anātmākāra), one must first acquire another form of kalpita jñānam, use it to eliminate the first, and then remove the second one too. As a thorn removes a thorn, and then the second thorn must also be discarded.

"Tyajadharmam adharmam ca ubhe satyāṅṛte tyaja / Ubhe satyāṅṛte tyaktvā yena tyajasi tanntyaja" — (Mahābhāratam)

Whatever knowledge causes you to abandon dharma and adharmā, satya and asatya (all dualities) — afterward, that very knowledge must also be abandoned. Therefore,

those who seek mokṣa (liberation) must — through the guidance of a sadguru (true teacher), reading of sacred texts, and sādhana (spiritual practice) — first acquire parokṣa jñānam (indirect knowledge), use it to remove the darkness of ajñāna within themselves, then remove even the parokṣānubhūti (indirect experience), and finally attain advaita, aparokṣānubhūti (direct, non-dual experience). Here many Vedāntins make a mistake. Without attaining parokṣānubhava through sādhana, they merely proclaim aparokṣa, advaita Vedānta with their mouths, imagining they have already become jīvanmuktas (liberated while living).

They proclaim the jñāna path but say that through śravaṇa, manana, nididhyāsana one can attain the four qualifications (sādhana-catuṣṭaya): (1) Viveka — discrimination between the eternal and the non-eternal, (2) Vairāgya — dispassion toward pleasures in this world and the next, (3) Śamādi ṣaṭka sampatti — the six virtues beginning with śama, (4) Mumukṣutva — intense desire for liberation — and through these, one can attain mokṣa. But without the fire of yoga, none of these can be accomplished.

"Bahūnāṃ janmanāmante jñānavān mām prapadyate / Vāsudevaḥ sarvamiti sa mahātmā sudurlabhaḥ" — (Bhagavad Gītā 7:19)

Even those Vedāntins who claim to practice Advaita Vedānta through śravaṇa, manana, and nididhyāsana — after accumulating many births of such effort, are in their final birth attracted to yogic practice, and through it attain the experience that "everything is Vāsudeva," and thus achieve siddhi (accomplishment). The fact that such mahātmās are said to be rare (sudurlabha) tells us that along with verbal Vedānta, one must first attain parokṣa vijñānam through yogic experience.

"Janmāntaraiśca bahubhir yogaḥ jñānena labhyate / Jñānaṃ tu janmanaikena yogādeva prajāyate" — (Yoga Śikhopaniṣat 1:9)

For those who are merely Vedāntins, yoga becomes available after many births. Through yoga, the experiential knowledge "Vāsudevaḥ sarvam" is attained in a single lifetime.

"Dvaikra cit rūpa kāryasāt advaita cit rūpa kāraṇāt / Nivṛttisyāt yadhādīpāt tamo na tvarūpatah" — (Ṛbhugītā)

Everyone agrees that fire exists within wood. Yet the fire within it does not burn the wood. The reason is that the fire exists in its un-manifested (nirguṇa) form. If you want to burn the wood, you must split it into two pieces, rub them together, and bring the inner fire to manifest outwardly.

"Yathāgniḥ dārumadyastho nottiṣṭhet mathanam vinā / Vinā ca abhyāsa yogena jñāna dīpas tathāna hi sa" — (Śruti)

Just as the fire within wood cannot emerge without friction (mathana), similarly, the lamp of knowledge (jñānadīpa) cannot arise without the practice of yoga. Similarly:

"Svadehaṃ araṇiṃ kṛtvā praṇavaṃ cottarāraṇiṃ / Dhyāna nirmathana abhyāsāt devaṃ paśyen nigūdhavat" — (Śvetāsvatāropaniṣat 1:14)

Making one's own body the lower friction-stick (araṇi, as used in a sacred fire ritual) and Praṇava (Om) the upper one, and churning through the practice of dhyāna (meditation) — one can see the Divine light which exists both in its attribute-less and hidden form, brought into manifestation. It is through the yoga-fire that one witnesses the light (jyoti) — this is saṅuṇa upāsana — but mere sākāra worship of an imagined form can never be that. That is only sākāropāsana (worship of a form). Sākāropāsana is different; saṅuṇopāsana is different.

There is darkness in a room. In the middle of the room, imagine there is an oil lamp (agnipatre). In that lamp, fire exists stored in the fuel — the fire that can ignite it is latent there. Since the fire in the fuel is in its attribute-less (nirguṇa) state, it cannot dispel the darkness in the room. If you take the fuel and rub it on the lamp — the fire comes out and dispels the darkness in the room.

In the same way, even though Paramātman or Para Brahman exists within us, it does not remove the darkness of ajñāna within us. If we take our own breath and churn it ourselves, the yoga-fire blazes up, the visible-world-impression (dṛśya-vāsanā) within us is burned, and we can become the self-luminous (svayaṃjyoti) form ourselves. Only that — and never the external sākārā worship with imagined visible forms — can remove the inner dṛśya-vāsanās. Therefore, saṅuṇopāsana can never be accomplished through external worship of visible forms.

What is Saṅuṇopāsana?

"Ātmanākāśa sambhūtāt" — The Ātman becomes space (ākāśa).

"Saiva śarīrī prathamah saiva puruṣa ucyate / Ādi kartā sa bhūtānāṃ brahmāgre samavartatā" — (Śruti)

From the nirguṇa Para Brahman, space (ākāśa) arose. That is its first body; that is called Puruṣa. That is the First Cause of all beings. That is called "Vāsudeva." *"Sarva bhūtādi vāsāt vāsudevasttadocyate."*

Space (ākāśa) has three types: Cittākāśa, Bhūtākāśa, and Cidākāśa.

"Cittākāśam cidākāśam ākāśam tu tr̥tīyakam / Dvābhyāṃ śūnya taram viddhi cidākāśam mahāmune" — (Mahopaniṣat 4:10)

Cittākāśa = the space filled with the mind's thoughts and imaginings (saṃkalpa-vikalpa)

Bhūtākāśa = the space within the five elements (pañcabhūtas)

Cidākāśa = Cit + Ākāśa = space filled with pure Consciousness and Light

Of these three, Cittākāśa and Bhūtākāśa appear to exist but in truth do not. Only Cidākāśa truly exists always. This is what we call God, Paramātman, and Saguṇa Brahman. Space and light is God. This is the body (śarīra) of the nirguṇa Brahman.

"Ākāśaśarīram brahma, satyātmā, prāṇārāmaṃ, mana ānandam, śānti samṛddha amṛtam iti prācīna yogopāssva" — (Taittirīyopaniṣat 1.6.1, 2)

The Cidākāśa form itself is the body of Brahman. That is called Satyātman. The state of bliss of the mind is that. The place where Prāṇa (breath) finds rest, the place rich with peace — that is it. Therefore, through Prāṇāyāma, dissolving the prāṇa into the Cidākāśa, witnessing the light, and rejoicing — that is saguṇopāsana. The nirguṇa Para Brahman possessing the quality of light (prakāśa) is "saguṇa" — not forms. But all these forms arise from light alone. Therefore, the yogi who witnesses light is not performing sākāropāsana. But those who do not know yoga, in the name of saguṇa, perform only sākāropāsana — they cannot perform true saguṇopāsana.

"Yo'ntahsukhontarārāmaḥ tathāntarjyotireva yaḥ / Sa yogī brahmanirvāṇam brahmabhūto'dhigacchati" — (Bhagavad Gītā 5:24)

The one who is a yogi — finding happiness within, finding rest within, witnessing the inner light — attains brahma-nirvāṇa. Therefore, jñānam means — through yoga, witnessing the inner light (antarjyoti), or becoming that very light (svayaṃ jyotisvarūpa) oneself. Though such experience may not be possible for everyone — it may not be achievable in one lifetime — even so, the yoga practitioner (yogabhraṣṭa) takes another birth and continuing yoga, attains siddhi. For that, śāstra jñānam is necessary.

"Śreyo hi jñānamabhyāsāt jñānāddhyānam viśiṣyate / Dhyānāt karmaphalatyāgaḥ tyāgācchāntir anantaram" — (Bhagavad Gītā 12:12)

Mere practice alone — better than that is practice combined with śāstra jñānam. That alone leads to dhyāna (meditation). After that, karma-phala-tyāga (renunciation of the fruits of action) — and through that, śānti (peace) is attained.

"Jñānavijñāna tṛptātmā kūṭastho vijitendriyaḥ / Yukta ityucyate yogī samaloṣṭāsmakāñcanaḥ" — (Bhagavad Gītā 6:8)

Here jñānam means śāstra jñānam (scriptural knowledge). Vijñānam means anubhava jñānam (experiential knowledge). The experiential knowledge of great sages becomes, for others, śāstra jñānam. Therefore, the yogi must have his own experience aligned with the experience of the sages of the past.

"Upadekṣyanti te jñānaṃ jñāninastattvadarśinaḥ" — (Bhagavad Gītā 4:34)

Only those gurus who have attained tattva-anubhūti (the experience of Truth) can impart their experience through the medium of śāstra.

"Tadviddhi praṇipātena paripraśnena sevayā" — (Bhagavad Gītā 4:34)

That knowledge must be attained through prostrating with full reverence (sāṣṭāṅga praṇāma), through long-time devoted service, and through asking appropriate questions with humility — this makes it clear that Brahma-vidyā has always come through the guru-paramparā (lineage of teachers), and that siddhi cannot be attained merely through reading texts or hearing lectures.

"Satkulaṃ śāstravātsalyaṃ śraddhāvantaṃ akuṭīlaṃ" — (Muktikopaniṣat)

By "satkulam" is meant one who is born in the lineage of Brahma-vidyā tradition, who has love for the scriptures (śāstravātsalya), who is full of śraddhā (faith and sincerity), and who is free from crookedness (kuṭīlatā).

What is Śāstra Jñānam?

Not everything written in Sanskrit is śāstra.

"Ahaṃ śāstreṇa nirṇetā, ahaṃ citte vyavasthitaḥ"

"I am determined by the śāstra. I reside in the citta (mind/consciousness)."

Śāstra = Śās + tram. Śās means breath (śvāsa); tram means weapon (astram). That which has breath as its weapon — that is śāstra. Using one's own breath as an arrow — that is, whatever through yogic sādhana brings the breath to a state of stillness — that is "śāstra." In other words, what explains the merging of the individual life-

consciousness (vyaṣṭi jīva bhāva) into the universal Paramātman (samaṣṭi) — that is "śāstra."

The Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā, the Upaniṣads, and the Brahmasūtras — these three are called the Prasthānatraya (the threefold canonical texts). These three alone must be taken as the śāstra pramāṇas (scriptural authorities). Through these three, Brahman is determined.

"Tasmācchāstraṃ pramāṇaṃ te kāryākāryavyavasthitau / Jñātvā śāstravidhānoktaṃ karma kartumihārhasi" — (Bhagavad Gītā 16:24)

In determining what should be done and what should not be done — these three śāstras alone must be taken as authority.

"Dustarkasuviramitāṃ śruti matastarkontusandhīyatāṃ" — (Words of Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara)

One must reason (tarka) in accordance with śruti pramāṇa — other forms of reasoning are all flawed. The smṛtis written by great sages in accordance with śruti pramāṇas are also authorities. However, since śrutis must have primacy, the subjects in smṛtis, itihāsas, and purāṇas must also be determined by śruti pramāṇas.

"Yat śāstravidhimutṣṛjya vartate kāmakārataḥ / Na sa siddhimavāpnoti na sukhaṃ na parāṃ gatim" — (Bhagavad Gītā 16:23)

Whoever abandons the śāstra-vidhi (injunction of scripture) and acts out of desire — that person does not attain siddhi, happiness, or the highest state.

"Ucchāstraṃ śāstritaṃ ceti pauraṣaṃ dvividhaṃ smṛtam / Ta trocchāstra manarthāya paramārthāya śāstritam" — (Muktikopaniṣat 2:2)

Human effort (pauraṣa) is said to be of two kinds: ucchāstra (against scripture) and śāstrita (in accordance with scripture). Ucchāstra leads to harm (anartham); śāstrita leads to the highest good (paramārtha). Śāstra-vidhi means: the dharmas and dharmasūkṣmas (subtle aspects of dharma) that must be followed while walking the path described in the scripture. The gross dharmas can be found in texts, but the dharmasūkṣmas exist only with enlightened gurus. Dharma-sūkṣma may appear to contradict dharma on the surface, but that is the truth. Therefore, even if it appears opposed to dharma — following the guru's command is dharma. This is the foremost dharma that Brahma-vidyā practitioners must observe.

"Yasya deve parābhaktir yathā deve tathā gurau / Tasyaite kathitā hyārthāḥ prakāśante mahātmanaḥ" — (Śvetāśvataropaniṣat 6:23)

To one who has supreme devotion to the Lord, and equal devotion to one's guru — to that mahātman alone, the meaning of the scriptures is revealed in full clarity.

"Guruvaktra sthitā vidyā gurubhaktyā ca labhyate" — (Gurugītā)

"The knowledge that resides in the guru's presence is obtained only through devotion to the guru." Therefore, only when śāstra jñānam taught by the guru is combined with the sādhana-path they have shown, does it bear fruit — any shortcoming in either makes siddhi impossible.

"Śrutyā yuktā svānubhūtyā" — (Śruti)

The guru's teaching, the analogy appropriate to it, and one's own experience — when all three are on the same straight path, they yield quick results. Therefore, yoga-sādhana and śāstra-jñānam — both are essential, as also confirmed in the scriptures in the following manner:

The Relationship between Yoga and Jñānam

"Yogāt sañjāyate jñānaṃ jñānādyogaḥ pravartate / Yoga-jñāna-paronityaṃ sa yogī na praṇaśyati" — (Triśikhi Brāhmaṇopaniṣat 16)

From yoga arises experiential knowledge. From śāstra knowledge, yoga grows. The yogi who is eternally united with both yoga and jñānam never perishes.

"Yogena rahitaṃ jñānaṃ na mokṣāya bhavedvidhe / Jñānenaiva vinā yogo na siddhyati kadācana" — (Yoga Śikhopaniṣat 9)

O Brahman! Śāstra jñānam without yoga is of no use for mokṣa. Similarly, yoga without śāstra jñānam will never achieve siddhi — not even once!

"Jñānaṃ kecit vadantyatra kevalaṃ tanna siddhaye / Yoga hīnaṃ kathaṃ jñānaṃ mokṣadaṃ bhavetīha bhoh / Yogo'pi jñāna hīnāstu na kṣamo mokṣa karmaṇi / Tasmāt jñānaṃ ca yogaṃ ca mumukṣur dṛḍham abhyaset" — (Yoga Śikhopaniṣat 3)

Some say that jñānam alone is sufficient for siddhi. But where is jñānam without yoga? And even if there is yoga, without śāstra jñānam, mokṣa cannot be attained. Therefore, those who desire mokṣa must earnestly practice both jñānam and yoga.

"Tapovidyācca viprasya vai śreyaskaram param" — (Śruti)

"Tapas" — from "tapyate iti tapaḥ" — means what causes burning away. That which burns (purifies) — both yoga and jñānam — are thus both forms of śreyaskaram (that which brings supreme good).

"Karmātma vijñānamapi krameṇa sampādyamekena nareṇa veda / Yat karmaṇā citta viśuddhi māpya sa vidyayāpnotyamṛtaṃ hi vidvān" — (Śruti)

One person must attain both karma and ātma-vijñānam. The karma by which citta-śuddhi (purification of mind) is attained, and the jñānam by which immortality (amṛtatva) is attained — both must be attained by the same person — this reveals the supreme importance of yoga and jñānam together.

"Dauḥkramau cittasūnyasya yogaṃ jñānaṃ ca rāghava / Yogaḥ tadṛtti nirodhō'hi jñānaṃ samyagavekṣaṇam" — (Yoga Vāsiṣṭham)

O Rāghava (Rāma)! For attaining citta-śūnyatā (emptiness of mind), there are two paths. Through yoga, the worldly (prāpañcika) mental modifications (citta-vṛttis) are restrained; and through jñānam, the Ātman is investigated and understood properly.

"Yogaścittavṛtti nirodhaḥ" — (Patañjali)

Yoga is the restraint of the modifications of the mind (citta-vṛtti nirodha). After restraining the citta-vṛttis, one must merge the mind into the Ātman. That is possible only through continuous ātma-vicāra (Self-inquiry).

"Bandhanam manasō nityam karmayogassa ucyate" — (Śruti)

"Yattu cittasya satataṃ arthe śreyasi bandhanam / Jñānayogassa vijñeya sarvasiddhi karaśśive" — (Triśikhi Brāhmaṇopaniṣat 18)

The continuous binding of the restless mind through prāṇāyāma is karma-yoga. Continuously binding that stilled mind to the Ātman is jñāna-yoga. For such a one, all things become accomplished.

"Vṛtti hīnaṃ manaḥ kṛtvā kṣetrajñam paramātmani / Ekīkṛtya vimucyeta yogo'yaṃ mukhya ucyate" — (Dakṣa Smṛti)

Making the mind free of vṛttis (mental modifications), and then merging the kṣetrajña (individual soul/knower of the field) into Paramātman — the chief means for this is

called yoga. Here, prāṇāyāma and ātma-vicāra-jñānam are both described together as yoga. Similarly:

*"Loke'smin dvividhā niṣṭhā purā proktā mayānagha / Jñānayogena sāmṅhyānām
karmayogena yoginām"* — (Bhagavad Gītā 3:3)

O sinless one (Arjuna)! From ancient times, I have declared two paths for people: jñāna-yoga for the sāmṅhyas (men of knowledge) and karma-yoga for the yogis (men of action).

These are not two separate paths — they are two steps on the same path. Why? Because:

*"Na karmaṇāmanārambhāt naiṣkarmyaṃ puruṣo'snute / Na ca sannyasanādeva
siddhiṃ samadhigacchati"* — (Bhagavad Gītā 3:4)

One cannot attain naiṣkarmya (state of actionlessness) by not beginning karma. Nor does one attain siddhi merely by renouncing karma. Therefore, by performing karma (yoga here), one must attain naiṣkarmya — showing that for the sādḥaka, both yoga and jñānam are necessary. Through karma-yoga, eventually the yoga-karma itself is relinquished.

In this world, some great souls are seen as jñānins without having practiced yoga — such persons must have been yogis in previous births. Similarly, a yogi's life inevitably ends in jñānam.