



Dharmi Jnanam & Dharma Bhuta Jnanam: The Two Forms of Knowledge

Bhagavad Gita Collection

Date: 2025-10-31

Description: Understanding the foundational concepts of knowledge that define the sentient soul and its relationship with the material universe

Tags: dharmi-jnanam, dharma-bhuta-jnanam, jeevatma, chetana, achetana, bhagavad-gita, vedanta, consciousness

The concepts of Dharmi Jnanam and Dharma Bhuta Jnanam are used extensively in the discourses to explain the fundamental philosophical distinctions between the sentient element (Chetana or the Jeevatma) and the insentient element (Achetana), specifically within the context of the Bhagavad Gita's Navamodhyayam (Ninth Chapter).

These definitions are crucial for understanding how the entire universe (Jagat), composed of Chetana and Achetana elements, relates to the Supreme Lord (Paramatma), who pervades and supports it.

Here are the contexts in which Dharmi Jnanam and Dharma Bhuta Jnanam are used for explanation:

1. Defining the Sentient Element (Chetana / Jeevatma)

The primary context for these terms is the philosophical definition of the individual soul (Jeevatma).

Chetana Defined

The Jeevatma is the Chetana vastu. Chetana comes from the root word Chaitanyam, meaning knowledge.

Substratum of Knowledge

Chetana is precisely defined as the substratum to knowledge, rather than merely that which possesses knowledge.

The Two Forms of Knowledge

The Jeevatma is the entity that supports and contains these two distinct forms of knowledge:

1. Dharmi Jnanam (Knowledge Personified)

This is the fundamental knowledge that is the Jeevatma itself. Its function is singular and constant: it asserts the feeling of self-existence, often articulated through the word "I" (e.g., "I slept well"). It is compared to the sugar that has completely permeated and pervaded the interior of a Mysore Pak sweet.

2. Dharma Bhuta Jnanam (Knowledge as an Attribute)

This knowledge is an attribute of the Jeevatma. It remains latent and only gets activated when one of the Pancha Gnanendriyas (five sense organs) comes into contact with an external Vastu (object). This attribute of knowledge is supported by the Jeevatma (the substratum). It is likened to the sugar crystal that remains stuck to the outside of the Mysore Pak.

Distinction

The Jeevatma (Chetana) is fundamentally defined as the substratum to Dharma Bhuta Jnanam.

2. Defining the Insentient Element (Achetana)

The contrast between these two forms of knowledge helps define the non-self, or the insentient material world:

Achetana Defined

Achetana is defined as that which is not a substratum to Dharma Bhuta Jnanam.

Material Body

The material body (Shariram), which is composed of Achetana elements, only seems sentient because the Chetana (Jeevatma) is present inside it and activates it.

3. Explaining Cosmic Creation and Existence

These concepts are introduced to facilitate the understanding of Krishna's statements in verses 9.4 and 9.5 of the Gita, which deal with the cosmic relationship between Paramatma and the universe.

The Universe (Jagat)

Krishna defines the Jagat (universe) as a composition of Chetana and Achetana elements (Chetana-achetanatmakam).

Paramatma's Pervasion

Krishna claims he pervades this entire universe (Maya tatam idam sarvam jagat). This requires the antecedent definition of the Chetana (the Jeevatma)—which possesses both Dharmi Jnanam and Dharma Bhuta Jnanam—and the Achetana.

The Paradox of Support

Krishna states, "Matsthani Sarvabutani Na chaham Teshu Avasthitaha" (All creation resides in Me, yet I am not in them). This paradox requires that the listener understand the nature of the supported entities (Chetana and Achetana) which was established through the explanation of Dharmi Jnanam and Dharma Bhuta Jnanam.

Summary

In summary, **Dharmi Jnanam** (knowledge personified as "I") and **Dharma Bhuta Jnanam** (knowledge attribute activated by the senses) serve as the foundation for the sophisticated theological distinction between the eternal soul

(Chetana) and the inert material world (Achetana). This distinction is necessary to explain Paramatma's pervasive yet non-dependent relationship with the universe as articulated in the Navamodhyayam.



Reference

This blog post is based on notes taken from the following video :

Video Sources: - [Watch on YouTube](#) - [Watch on YouTube](#) - [Watch on YouTube](#)

For a more detailed explanation, I highly recommend watching the original videos.



Acknowledgment & Disclaimer

These articles are based on discourses by **Sri Dushyanth Sridhar**, who renders discourses in English & Tamil on Rāmāyana, Mahābhārata, Bhāgavata, Vishnu Purāna, Bhagavad Gitā, Vishnu Sahasranāma, and Divya Prabanda in the upanyāsam, pravachanam, or kālakshepam style. Visit <https://desikadaya.org> for more information. These notes are presented solely for educational purposes to help viewers download and benefit from these teachings. Any incorrect interpretations or inaccuracies are mine and unintentional—please forgive me. For any feedback, please send an [email](#).