

***Jiva* or Soul in Jainism**

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***Jiva* or Soul**

The Jaina conception of *Jiva* (Soul) occupies the first place among the doctrines of independent soul. The Jaina view of soul appears to be older than the views of other Indian systems of thought and it is comprehensible to the common people. This sentient principle was well established as the object of meditation for liberation of Lord Parshvanath in the eighth century B.C. The Jaina doctrine of soul did not change from the long past to the present time as it happened in the Buddhist and Vedic traditions

The term *Jiva* connotes that Soul is consciousness itself and consciousness also is invariably soul. The *Jiva* is non-corporeal, living, eternal and permanent, and fixed (constant) substance of the Cosmic Universe, having the attributes of consciousness (*Cetana*). *Jiva* is the generic name of sentient substance. *Jiva* substance is non-physical and is not sense - perceptible; it does not have the properties of colour, smell, taste and touch. Consciousness and *upayoga* are the differentia of the *jiva*. *Upayoga* and consciousness are the two sides of the same entity *jiva*. Consciousness may be interpreted both as a structure and a function of the *jiva* but *upayoga* refers to the functional side only. *Upayoga* gives us almost the same meaning as we get by being mentally active. Just as a mental activity is a fact of mental functioning and a mental capacity, a fact of mental structure; in the same way consciousness or *chetana* may be taken as a fact of the *jiva*'s structure and *upayoga*, as a fact of the *jiva*'s function.

Consciousness is the generality of the attributes (if not of all the attributes of the *jiva*), which distinguish the *jiva* from the inanimate. *Upayoga* is the generality of the manifestations of such attributes. This shows that the attributes of intelligence and intuition alone, as is generally understood, can be given a status of consciousness in the structure of the *jiva*; and these will not constitute the differentia of the *jiva*. However, intelligence and intuition are agreed to be the two main manifestations (*upayoga*) of consciousness. Both of them are comprehensions of the object by the subject.

Consciousness in mundane souls manifests itself in several ways: intelligence, knowledge, intuition, bliss, perception (cognitive elements), emotions, will, attitude and behaviour, awareness of pleasure and pain. Life and consciousness are coextensive. Wherever there is life, there is consciousness and vice versa. But there are degrees of explicitness or manifestation of consciousness in different organisms. In the lowest class of organisms, it is very much latent, while in human beings, it is very much manifest. *Jiva* is entirely distinct from inanimate existence, which does not possess consciousness.

Jiva is described from the aspects of substance (*dravya*), field or locus (*ksetra*), time (*kala*), condition or state (*bhava*) and capacity or quality (*guna*) respectively in regard to its co-relation with them. It is in number infinite living substances from the point of view of *dravya*, co-extensive with space of the Cosmic Universe from that of *ksetra*, eternal and permanent from that of *kala*, colourless, smell less, tasteless and touch less from that of *bhava*, and it is endowed with an attribute of consciousness (*cetana*) from that of *guna*.

Among many capacities of the soul the main and most comprehensible of all are capacity of knowledge, capacity of energy, capacity of volition or desire and capacity of right attitude of mind or belief. These capacities are non-different from it. *Jiva* is endowed with energy, exertion, action, strength, effort and vigor, and it manifests its sentiency by the state of itself, because soul having the inherent attribute of consciousness attains cognition of infinite modes of all kinds of knowledge and those of wrong knowledge, those of self-awareness, etc.

The soul is *jnana* (knowledge), i.e. endowed with right knowledge in some respect and also wrong knowledge in other aspect; the *jnana* itself is invariably soul, for consciousness is its inherent quality. Similarly, self-awareness and outside objects are correlated, because soul is possessed of the capacity of taking note of the natural external objects; it is the knower. It is also invariably self-awareness (*darsana*) and self-awareness is invariably soul itself.

Life-essentials of worldly soul are represented by five senses, mental, vocal and bodily activities, duration of life and respiration. Whatever things and behaviors it makes, such as forces (*samskaras*), etc. are reflected in it, one fine material body, called karma body, containing an impression of these forces is being formed by it, and that body exists and accompanies it at the time of taking up another new body.

Jiva and special type of *pudgala-skandhas*, which are called *karma*, are mutually associated. Because of various activities and actions of *jīva*, an association is established between *karma-pudgalas* and *jīva* and according to these actions/activities; *karma pudgalas* affect *jīva* in a peculiar way. All the souls in this universe undergo effects such as sorrow, happiness, birth, death etc. so long as they are afflicted by *karma-pudgalas*. Only those souls who get emancipated from these effects of *karma-pudgalas* are designated as ‘*Paramatma*’ or ‘*Siddha*’.

Jiva, even being conscious and non-corporeal, becomes corporeal by its activity of collected (formed) corporeal body up to the moment of existence of such body. In regard to the relation of soul with mind, speech and body, it is plain that speech and mind are non-soul, i.e. matter, for they are corporeal, non-conscious and non-living, and are associated with the spiritual being soul. As to its relation with body it is defined that soul is identical with body, with the former exists in the latter. Thus the soul is corporeal and non-corporeal, conscious and non-conscious, living and non-living and it is of beings and non-beings also. The body was destroyed in the past, it exists and undergoes transformation at present and it will undergo transformation in future into the gross physical, gross physical-cum-translocation, transformation, transformation-cum-translocation, translocation, translocation-cum-karmic, and karmic bodies in association with the spiritual being, i.e. soul.

Dimension of extent (*parimana*) of soul decreases and increases according to the size of body. This change does not affect its fundamental substantiality; its basic essence remains unchanged. This is one kind of doctrine of transformation and also the doctrine of permanence-in-change. Its other aspect is the variation in manifestation of the quality or capacity of soul; it becomes the nature of permanence-in-change of the capacity.

Souls are existent in every iota of space beginning with one or more countless fractions of it up to the whole universe, i.e. if space is divided into countless points the size of a soul can be so small as to occupy one or more of these points of space and in special cases, of *samudaghata*, the size of a single soul can fill the whole universe. Thus the number of *pradesas* in each individual soul is equal to the number of *pradesas* in the Universe, which is countless. There is no such place in the universe where there is no existence of souls having fine or gross bodies.

In the multitude of souls the inherent capacity of soul is accepted as one (equal), nevertheless, the manifestation of each one is not equal. It is conditional upon the strength of its efforts (*purusartha*) and other causes. It means that the capacity of soul is one, viz. consciousness, but it manifests itself in and through these stages. Soul in the absolute sense is imperishable, immortal and impenetrable; none can cause pain or destruction to it nor can cut its inner points by touching it with hand or cutting it with a sharp weapon or burning it with fire; no weapon can enter into it.

The soul is eternal from the point of view of time and non-eternal from that of the state of existence (*gati*), as it is studied from its substantial and modal aspects respectively, for it was in the past, is at present and will be in future, and it undergoes change or transformation from one birth to another.

In nutshell the nature of *Jiva* conceived in Jain philosophy is this that it is super sensuous, imperishable, immortal, impenetrable, non-corporeal, eternal and non-eternal, infinite and finite, and dynamic in nature.

In short the following facts apply to the soul:

1. In embodied existence, soul and body appear to be same but this is not really so. Body is different from soul.
3. Soul contracts or expands to occupy the space of the body he assumes. The same soul can pervade the body of an elephant or an ant. Notwithstanding the size of the body, the number of *pradesa* of soul remains the same (countless).
4. Soul is non corporeal and is recognized by his power of perceiving and knowing objects.
5. Soul is the source of intuition, perception, happiness and vitality in a living organism.
6. Being invisible, soul is identified by his ability of cognizance, an embodied soul desires for comical amusement, recreation, pleasure, speech, movement etc.
7. The karma *varganas* attracted by a soul get converted into karma unaided.
8. The thoughts and actions of a soul leave a permanent impression. These impressions are stored in the karma body, which moves with the soul in his journey from one body to another.
9. The bondage of soul and karma is beginning less. The karma can be shed from the soul by practicing austerity and penance. This in fact, is the way to get rid of karma and attain the state of emancipation.
10. Soul is non-corporeal but he is embodied due to his impurity in the presence of karma.

11 All living organisms have similar potential powers and abilities but every living organism is in a different state of manifestation. The development of the soul is determined by own purifying efforts and other governing factors.

12 There is no place in *loka* where soul in subtle or gross form (of organism) is not present.

Soul: The Subject and the Object

In the absolute sense the soul can only be conscious of itself, because it alone exists as that state of pure singularity. When we say ‘it is conscious of itself’, we separate the intellectual level into two aspects: (1) the aspect that it is observer and (2) the aspect that it is observed (although they are one and the same). Intellectual examination, in fact, reveals the existence within consciousness of three values, inherent in any process of conscious experience or any process of observation: (1) the observer, (2) the observed, and (3) the process of linking the observer and the observed.

Even though there is nothing but one consciousness, this principle of three emerges. Consciousness being awake to itself experiences itself, and is at once the knower, the process of knowing, and the known- observer, process of observation, and observed; or subject, object, and the process of linking them. In this state of absolute consciousness, these three values are one and the same, yet they represent these aspects of the same singularity.

It is obvious that every relative experience requires a subject coming together with an object. This coming together takes place both on the level of attention as well as on the sensory level of perception. When the subject comes together with the object through the process of observation, then the experience occurs- then knowledge of the object by the subject takes place. Knowledge therefore, is the result of the coming together of the observer, the process of observation, and the observed.

As one consciousness leads to three aspects, the interaction between the three and the resultant aspects, relationships, and their interaction, etc. leads to an infinite number of ever-expanding possibilities. All these possibilities, all these forces of interaction and relation, exist in the soul.

The interaction of forces, even though within the soul, creates a dissymmetry, as if a distortion, in the flat and homogeneous- yet infinitely flexible- absolute singularity of soul. The virtual pull and push, rise and fall, vibration and silence, dynamism and silence, leads to the formation of structure within the soul. Structure is the result of apparent breaking of infinite symmetry. With all interactions always taking place in accordance with the fundamental forces that uphold them, structure is the result of the virtual distortion generated by the interaction of forces.

In the pure soul or the soul of the Omniscient the structure is absent and the subject and the object is the same pure consciousness. In the impure soul the subject is the consciousness and the object is the structure created by the virtual distortion. The structure identifies the perverted state of the soul.

Relations between Soul and Body

How is the soul related to body? This needs some explanation. But first the doubt of some that soul exists must be clarified. The following arguments support the existence of the soul.

- 1 Self-consciousness possessed by a living being like I am, I am happy, I am sad, etc. The body does not make such experiences. Expressions like, I have done it, I do it, I will do it indicate the existence of soul the doer.
2. The intention of doubt, curiosity, inquisitiveness, etc. is expressions of consciousness. The doubt I am or I am not, also generates in the soul and not in the body.
3. The soul is the counterpart of matter (*ajiva*). The existence of a substance without a counterpart cannot be supported logically.

As the soul is non-corporeal, it cannot be perceived or known by the senses, mind and intellect. Its attribute is consciousness, which too is beyond the reach of perception. It (consciousness) can be known only through its function, but it cannot be directly comprehended through sensory perception. The denial of the existence of the soul may chiefly be attributed to its imperceptibility.

We mentioned above that the soul extends in the body. The soul being non-physical in fact has no contact with the body. The relation with the body is made through karma. The soul is bound with karma but it has no contact with the karma either. The soul and karma has an association of essential nature. The soul does not occur without association with karma in nature, that is, the soul is always in impure state unless purified by special efforts. Was the soul without karma at any time in the past? No, like any other chemical element the soul is also found in impure state, impregnated with karma, in nature. The karmas bond because of the very nature of the karma *vargana*, the subtle cosmic matter, which are attracted by the soul due to its activities. The processes taking place in the soul due to its activities and that in the karma body run parallel, the soul experiences modification of its state and there is corresponding change in the karma body. The soul and karma are always in a state of some kind of equilibrium. The soul becomes free of karma only in the liberated state when all the karma is eliminated by special efforts. Once free no more karma is bound and the soul is not embodied again. The soul has innumerable *pradesas* and the karmas bond uniformly on each *pradesa*, there is no soul *pradesa* without association with karma. In this specific sense the principle of non-locality holds in the space of the soul

The body is constituted by cells. The soul *pradesa* and karma are associated with each cell. The cells and hence the body cannot function without soul and karma. There is life in the body so long as soul is associated with it; the body is dead when the soul departs. The soul extends only in the cells of the body. Our body contains some hollow spaces and spaces where the excreted material like urine and stool etc. are stored. These spaces do not contain cells and the soul does not extend there. The cells (live) are the places through which we experience pain and pleasure, because of presence of the soul; the empty spaces, and dead cells, are devoid of any

sensation perception. The sensation of pain and pleasure is made by the soul through karma, in the absence of karma the soul does not have such sensation, and it experiences the bliss which is its natural attribute. It may be mentioned here that if pain is negative excitation, pleasure is positive excitation and the bliss is state of no excitation of the soul.

Derivative Powers of Soul

The natural (*svabhavika*) powers are intrinsic to soul and are not related to karma. A mundane soul also has derived perverted (*vaibhavika*) powers due to removal or removal-cum-subsidence of karma. These powers are characteristic of the impure or perverted modes of the soul. The derived powers and the natural powers mutually influence each other and therefore in presence of derived powers the natural powers of the soul are not experienced naturally.

Based on karma the derived powers may be divided in two categories, the psychic powers as a consequence of removal or subsidence or removal-cum-subsidence of psychical karma (*ghatin*) and biological and physiological powers for physiological karma (*aghatin*). The psychic powers support the psychic activities like thinking, imagining, willing, creating choices and taking decisions, memory etc and physiological powers support the biological functions of designing, constructing and operating the body, the activities of sensing the objects, producing feelings, interacting with environment etc. The derived powers are produced by auxiliary cause (*nimita*) and remain in existence as long as the cause, karma, is present. Our existence as a human being is due to the derived powers of the soul and all our activities, psychic and somatic, are heavily dependent on these powers. The natural powers are manifested in a significant way only when the influence of derived powers is reduced on weakening of karma and our perception changes from indirect to direct.

The psychic powers and biological powers work in specific ways. The manifestation of psychic powers affect cognition that generates knowledge: this knowledge of the external world is, however, called *ajnana*, ignorance, in Jainism as it does not help in the ultimate goal of attaining salvation. As psychical karmas are reduced the natural powers of the soul are manifested in greater proportions and when this happens in large measure the soul attains the ability of direct cognitions. When all the psychical karmas are eliminated the ignorance is also eliminated and the soul attains omniscience, the state in which infinite *jnana* and *darshana* attributes, the natural powers of the soul are manifested.

At the start of life cycle from one-sense beings least amount of biological powers are manifested. As physiological karmas reduce the soul derives powers to have body with more numbers of senses and in the later stage acquires a human body. The sense organ with which the soul performs intelligent activities of mind, speech and body and the power to perform these activities is called *karan* in Jainism. As the physiological karmas are further reduced the soul develops abilities to manage the body in extraordinary ways which are known as supernatural powers. In the state of omniscience only minimum amount of physiological karmas are in balance and the whole body becomes *karan* and every part of body becomes means of super-sensory perception. The senses now become Omni-directional and normal sense organs lose their importance.

The physical sense organs, *dravyendrian*, have their counterpart in the soul structure known as *bhavendrian* or the psychic senses. The psychic senses are in the form of manifested *jnana* and *darshana* due to removal cum subsidence of respective karma. The physical sense organs are formed by rise of morphological (*naam*) karma and function because of existence of corresponding psychic sense that is the intelligent action performed by sense organs is due to manifestation of *jnana* and *darshana* attributes of the soul or *upayoga* of consciousness of the soul. Mere existence of organs in physical form, as in a dead body, cannot result in intelligent action in the absence of soul.

Physical sense system has two parts *nirvriti* and *upakaran* and each of these has two sub parts. The sub parts of *nirvriti* are (a) the outer part in the form of physical sense organ, and (b) the inner part in the form of some soul structure. *Upakaran* assists *nirvriti*. The outer part of *upakaran* is physical, implying brain that assists senses to comprehend the object. The inner part of *upakaran* is again some structural aspect of soul. Physical sense organs successfully work when both *nirvriti* and *upakaran* are functional; in case of malfunctioning of any of them the intelligent action is hampered.

The psychic senses have two parts *labdhi* and *upayoga*. *Labdhi* refers to power of the soul due to removal or removal-cum-subsidence of knowledge obscuring karma. *Upayoga* refers to manifestation of power of the soul and it is of two types one vested with form, *sakara* or plural, and the second formless, *nirakara* or singular. The first refers to *jnana* and the second to *darshana*. So *bhavendrian* essentially mean manifestation of consciousness of the soul as *jnana* and *darshana* attributes, which are instrumental in performance of intelligent action by an organism.

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