

# The Concept of Pure Soul - An Overview

- Dr. Jayanti Lal Jain

The present era is termed as the age of science and technology. Science has done a great service to the mankind by providing amenities of pleasant living and saved from many miseries and uncertainties known in the past. In the process, we know much about the atom but not about the self, which is absolutely needed for a meaningful and peaceful life. Our life is full of excitements, emotional disorders and value conflicts. The truths revealed by Lord MAHAVEER go much beyond what the sciences have to offer to mankind. However, the concept of soul, although secular, eternal and pure by its very nature, has been made more complicated by the existence of different systems of faiths, religions, languages, philosophies, cultures, vested social and political interest of different leaders and their followers, economic interests, etc.

All the Jain concepts flow from the concept of pure soul only. Non-violence, non-attachment, non-absolutism, right knowledge, right attitude, right conduct, equanimity, non-possession, peacefulness, happiness, etc., are, indeed, the attributes of pure soul and hence advocated under Jainism. The concept of pure soul is the core concept and deserves studies, again and again. If the mankind understands this concept of pure soul, peace and harmony can certainly be established in the world and one can ultimately get lasting liberation. An overview of the concept of pure soul is presented as follows:

**1. The Environment of Soul** - If we scan the environment of soul, there are six matters in the universe — Soul, atoms (particles), space, medium of motion, medium of rest and time. Among the six matters, soul is the living matter and the rest are non-living. Only a group of atoms are visible and other matters are invisible and are to be recognized or realized. Soul and atoms are the only two active matters, i.e., these move from one place to another through the complicated process of operation of *Karma* particles. The living matter can be either under bondage (influence of atoms), affected by the cycle of births and deaths or liberalized (*Moksha* – without bondage).

**2. Mundane Existence** - Soul's mundane existence is characterized by one's complete ignorance of oneself (soul) and allowing *Karmas* to operate in entirety. Through *Karma*, everything that happens to one's soul in contemporary existence is explained. The degree of fulfillment of our desires is limited by complicated operations of *Karmas* of previous births. These desires cause perpetual existence of impurities and the stages of impurities depending on

the type of species and external conditions under which a life is born due to one's own *Karmas*. But these impurities are alien to the eternal nature of pure soul.

**3. The Real Nature of Soul** - The fundamental nature of soul is characterized only by consciousness, i.e., absence of properties or nature of non-living substances. The soul is a treasure of infinite properties such as life, consciousness, knowledge, vision, happiness, omnipotence, omni-vision, omniscience, etc., and cannot be diluted or diminished by any other object. These properties manifest in their full in the state of liberation or when the state of omniscient is realized, although these exist and remain dormant in the infinite cycle of births and deaths.

**4. Independence in Functioning of Substances** - The real soul is devoid of *Karma*, body or bodies, five senses, mind, colors, smell, taste and touch. The soul does not have feelings of attachment or detachment. The soul is devoid of anger, greed, delusion and ego. The different bodies such as those of germs, ants, bees, animals, human beings and creatures of hell or heaven are due to *Karmas* and do not really belong to a soul. These are only associated with the soul. These are all due to complex operations of *karmic* matters. Thus, there are innumerable ways in which the soul is described but these do not reflect the ultimate reality or attributes of a pure soul.

The entire universe with its six matters, their properties and their infinite forms, continues to exist forever without any matter disturbing or interfering in the functioning of other matters. Each matter is functioning independently in its own way. Soul and atoms move from one part of the universe to the other. The other four matters are inactive and cannot make movements and are merely instrumental in facilitating the functioning of the former two matters.

**5. Realization of Soul** - The key to *Moksha*/salvation lies in realization of true nature of soul. As said above, the soul has infinite properties. The contemplation of these properties as exist in their indivisible whole leads to self-realization and ultimate salvation. The moment one perceives oneself as pure soul, the journey to *Moksha* begins. When the same perception is pursued relentlessly, the state of *Moksha* is realized.

**6. Causal Nature of Soul** - The fundamental causal nature of soul is different from body characteristics, senses or *prana*. The knowledge of the true and eternal nature of soul as reflected in infinite properties is the only causal nature in the realization of soul. The fundamental properties of energy are different from that of machines/equipment, although electrical gadgets or machines do not function in the absence of energy. Senses, etc., are in fact attributes of

inanimate thing or body and not that of a soul.

Causes can be classified into six as doer, deed, means, donee, donor and supportive stage. From the real point of view, every substance has inherent ability to work for itself and all the six causation take place in the same substance independently and without interference or need for help from other substances for a particular action to take place. Every substance itself undergoes changes, within itself, by itself, for itself, from itself and on the basis and support of itself. This is the universal truth.

**7. Infinite Souls and Infinite Power** - There are infinite souls in the universe and not that there is one soul that pervades all souls or that all souls are – part of the Great Soul. The number of atoms is in infinite multiples of souls. The units of time are infinitely greater than units of time. The space is infinitely greater than units of time. A soul has infinite properties greater than the units of space and gets manifested when realized. The power of a soul is greater than the power of all the substances put together and is the most wonderful thing in the universe.

**8. Oneness of God and Pure Soul** - According to Jainism, every soul has the potentialities to become God when the true nature of pure soul is realized. God is a pure and perfect soul and not a creator, sustainer and destroyer of the universe. There are infinite souls in the state of *Moksha* and thus there are infinite Gods and the number ever gets increasing only. The pure soul does not cause any change anywhere as it does not produce anything else, the pure soul produces itself in infinite forms.

**9. Object of Meditation** - Jainism does not believe that by devotion to God through prayers/rituals, God will become happy and remove the sufferings and misery of souls in mundane existence. Nothing happens in the universe through the blessings/boons by God. The God (Pure Soul) does not descend from *Moksha* to help anyone. Each soul acquires one's own knowledge and achieves self-realization and achieves *Moksha* through the constant meditation on the true and eternal nature of soul.

**10. Secular Concept** - A secular concept must display certain characteristics such as eternality, purity, independence, beneficial to all, relevant to souls of all times and places, all-pervading knowledge, self-based system, divine in nature, etc. The concept of pure soul has all these characteristics. The concept of pure soul with infinite properties is the most secular and scientific devoid of biases and blind beliefs. The pure soul/God is addressed by hundreds of names and these names, although seem to be different, refer to one or more attributes associated with the pure soul.

To sum up, the concept of pure soul is an integrated, secular and most holistic one relevant to everyone in the universe and for all times. The pure soul is an ocean of infinite jewels/treasure of properties, infinite names and manifestations, each describing a particular property. These properties are permanent, timeless, immutable, sovereign, independent, and unconquerable by any other object. Just as jewels adorn the crown, these properties adorn the pure soul. One, who knows the value of jewels, knows the value of the crown. Likewise, one who knows the infinite power of properties of soul, knows valuation of the pure soul. The pure soul is the crown of the Universe, most wonderful one with infinite power.

**About Dr. Jayanti Lal Jain:** Dr. Jain currently serves as Director, Center of Philosophical Sciences, Mangalayatan University at Aligarh, India. He is a very learned Jain scholar giving daily Pravachans, covering multiple aspects of Jain studies, delivering key note speeches for many Jain programs or special auspicious events for the last 25 years. Dr. Jain holds Ph. D in Economics from Oklahoma State University, USA and Ph. D in Jainology from University of Madras, Chennai. He was Professor Emeritus at Department of Jainology, University of Madras. He worked at Indian Bank, Chennai as Chief Economic Advisor/ General Manager. Dr Jain has published many articles on Jain Philosophy and on Economics, Banking and Finance. His books on 'Pure Soul and its Infinite Treasure', 'Acharya Kundakund and Jain Philosophy' have been published by University of Madras. He has delivered many special lectures in India and abroad and has considerable teaching experience.