

## LESSON 02

## SOUL AND BODY

Most of us believe in the soul, but many may still wonder if the soul and body are the same. The Jains believe that a soul is different from the body. Until the soul is free from the karmas it resides in different types of the bodies depending upon its destiny at the time of death from the previous life. In the Jain literature it is mentioned that the soul and body are different entities and that was discussed between muni Keshikumar and King Paradeshi. Muni Keshikumar belonged to Lord Parshvanath's (23rd Tirthankara) ascetic order. He was well disciplined, practiced penances of high order and had the Avadhi and Manaha Paryava knowledges. The King Paradeshi did not believe in the religion and the soul.

It all started one fine morning, when Chitra, the chariot driver, brought the King Paradeshi where monk Keshikumar was giving a sermon.

On seeing the monk King Paradeshi asked, "Who is this rustic monk? What does he live on? What does he drink? How does he appear so robust and handsome physically? And what does he preach to the people to attract such a large audience here?"

Chitra said, "Your honor! He is the monk Keshikumar from the order of Parshvanath. He is noble by birth and possessed four-fold knowledge.

As King and Chitra approached Keshikumar, Acharya Keshikumar said to the king, you were wondering, what is this dunce preaching to the people, crying so loud, and not allowing anybody the rest or peace?"

The King was amazed, and said, "This is true. But how did you know this?"

Acharya replied, "Oh King, our scriptures laid down by the unattached Jinas have said that knowledge is of five types namely Mati, Shruta, Avadhi, Manahparyava and Kevala. Out of these five, I have attained the first four and because of that I can read your thoughts."

The King sat down and asked the acharya, "Oh Lord, Jain monks teach that both body and soul are separate entities. Is it true?"

Keshikumar replied, "Yes, we believe that."

The King said, "The Soul and the Body are not distinct but are identical and the same. Listen, how I arrived at such a conclusion. My grandfather was the King of this very city. He cared for the bodily pleasures and thought he was caring for the soul. He neglected his citizens and carried out unrighteous activities. As per Jain religion, he must have been reborn in some kind of hell. I am his beloved grandson and carrying out similar life. Therefore out of love for me he would have come to warn me that, "My grandson, do not commit sins for your body sake because the soul and body are separate things. I am suffering in hell because because I made mistake. But he never came. Therefore I believe

that the body and the soul are the same.

Acharya asked, "What would you do if some young man were to indulge in sensual pleasures with your beautiful Queen?"

The King said, "Oh Lord, I would chop his hands, legs, and hang him."

Acharya said, "Oh King, would you give permission to that man, and wait for a few hours, till he can go and tell his relatives and friends to stay away from such act?"

The King said, "Oh Lord that would never happen. That man would be hung right away."

Acharya said, "Oh King, your grandfather is also undergoing the punishment for his deeds helplessly. Just as you would not permit that man to warn his folks, the brutal guards of hell would not turn your grandfather loose even if he wanted to warn you. Therefore, you should not conclude that body and soul are the same."

The King, "Listen to one more anecdote which strengthens my conviction that there is no independent entity as soul. My grandmother, who was very religious minded and highly devoted to the Jain Monks. She was familiar with the fundamentals like Jiva (soul) and Ajiva (matter). She followed religious life and performed many austerities. My grandmother died and in Jains opinion, she must have gone to heaven. I am her grandson. She also cared for me very much. She could have come from the heaven and told me, "Oh grandson, practice religion and do something for your soul and not the body." But till today, she had not come. So, I am not inclined to believe that the body and the soul are distinct.

Acharya said, "Suppose you took the bath and wore white clothes to go to the temple. On the way someone from the lavatory (open rest rooms were common in old age) calls you to talk to him for a little while over there. Oh king, would you do that?" The king said, "Oh Lord, I would not go to such a filthy and dirty place."

Acharya said, "Oh king, in the same manner your grandmother would not come and speak to you about the happiness she gained for doing things for the soul because of the following four reasons:

- 1) The earthly world smells very filthy. The heavenly angels are disgusted with such smell and therefore they do not like to come back to the earthly world.
- 2) The heavenly angels are very much engrossed in celestial happiness and therefore don't leave that even for a minute.
- 3) The heavenly angels get engrossed into a new loving relationship with other gods and goddesses and don't enjoy as much from the human relationship.
- 4) Even if the heavenly angels engrossed in divine happiness desire to go back to the human world in just a little bit of their time, that time interprets into thousands of

earth years. So by that time the short living human relatives have already died and there is no one to go for.

From these you shall realize that just because your grandmother did not return to warn you it does not prove that the body and the soul are the same.

The King said, "Listen to one more piece of evidence in this connection. Once upon a time I was sitting on my throne. Once, a police officer brought a thief for punishment. I packed the live thief in an iron chest and closed the iron lid tight. The gap between the lid and main section was welded carefully so that there was not a minute hole left. After a few days this chest was opened and the man was found dead. If Soul and Body are separate, how could the Soul escape such a sealed chest? Therefore, I contend that the body and soul are one and when body stops its activity the soul also loses all activities."

Acharya replied, "Oh King, Suppose a man with a bell and hammer is sealed in a big room with a circular dome, with doors closed tight, and plastered from all the sides so that no air penetrate in. Now if a man from inside hammers the bell, would you hear the sound from outside?"

The King said, "Yes Lord, sound would be heard."

Acharya asked, "But there is no hole in the room?"

The King said, "Yes Lord, even though there is no hole at all, I will hear the sound."

Acharya said, "Oh King, just as the sound has a capacity to escape from a room without a hole, the soul also can escape from a chest without a hole. The Soul has a capacity to pierce through metal, stone, wall, or mountain and escape."

The King said, "Your honor, once I weighed a live thief, then I killed him and weighed him again. I found no difference in his weight at all. If the body and soul are distinct entities, there should have been at least some decrease in weight, but there was no decrease and therefore, the body and soul are one and the same."

Acharya asked, "Oh king, have you ever filled a leather bag with air? Is there any difference in the weight of an empty bag or a bag filled with air?"

King said, "No your honor, there is no difference."

Acharya asked, "Oh king, there is no difference in weight of an empty bag and that of an air-filled bag. Does it, therefore, mean that the bag did not contain air?"

Oh king, weight or gravity is an attribute of a lifeless matter and the touch is necessary for its perception. A matter cannot be weighed until it is touched and caught. So how can the soul which is quite a distinct from the body cannot be touched or caught can be weighed?"

King said, "Oh Lord, once a thief sentenced to death was cut to pieces by me in the search for the soul. But I could not find the soul in any of those pieces and therefore, body and soul are not distinct entities."

Acharya said, "Oh king, it is well-known in the world that fire resides in Arni sticks (kind of the wood which ignites when rubbed). Can the fire be found if the Arni stick is cut into small pieces? Therefore, it is silly to believe that the soul does not exist, just because the soul was not found in any piece of the body."

King said, "Oh Lord, the belief that the body and soul are one was held by my grand father and father and had been passed on to me. This is my hereditary belief, how can I disown this belief?"

Acharya said, "Oh king, if you do not disown this conviction, then you will have to repent like one obstinate fellow who did not dump a load of iron bars."

The King said, "Who was that obstinate fellow and why did he repent?"

Acharya said, "Oh king, some people in want of the wealth started journey to a forest. They found a mine with abundant iron. They mutually talked about the usefulness of iron and decided to carry stacks of it and went along. As they proceeded further in the forest, they found a mine of lead. Lead being more useful than iron, all of them let off the iron stack and picked up the lead stacks except one, who did not like to let off the iron bundle. His companions tried to persuade him but he replied, "I have carried this bundle for a long distance. It is well tied, so I do not want to leave it and take up the bundle of lead bars." Now the travelers proceeded further to find the mines of copper, silver, gold, jewels and diamonds one after the other. They threw away the less valuable load and took up the more valuable things except that one who kept on carrying on the iron stacks because he did not want to change. Later on, they arrived in a city where they sold very precious diamonds. This made them very rich and they began to stay happily. That obstinate fellow sold his iron bars and earned little money. He was very sorry now and began to think, "I also could have earned ample wealth if I would have dropped the iron and picked up the diamonds."

Thus Oh king, if you do not let off your obstinacy you will also repent like the fellow who carried the iron bars."

These explanations from monk Keshikumar convinced the king that the soul is different from the body.