

In Jainism, Jiva and soul are more or less described synonymously. When the spiritual or psychic status is described it is referred to as the soul, and when the physical structure i.e. soul and body are described together, it is called Jiva.

The jiva (soul plus body) which grows, decays, fluctuates, varies, eats, sleeps, awakes, acts, fears, rests, has knowledge and perception, attempts to self defend, and reproduces. These and many more qualities of the jiva are obvious through a physical body when the soul is present in it but when the soul leaves these qualities cease.

The jiva (Soul minus body) in pure state is said to have Infinite perception, Infinite Knowledge, Infinite bliss and Infinite power. These qualities of soul are hidden by karmas. This also makes it clear for us that the body and the soul are separate entities.

Since the soul is shapeless and flexible, it pervades the entire body it occupies. For example, the soul can occupy the body of an ant or an elephant.

Jivas are categorized in two groups:

- 1. Liberated Living Beings or Siddha Jiva**
- 2. Non-Liberated Living Beings or Worldly (Sansari) Jiva.**

1) Liberated Living Beings

Liberated souls have no karmas and therefore, they are no longer in the cycle of births and deaths. They do not live among us, but reside at the uppermost part of this universe called Siddhashila. They are formless and shapeless, have perfect knowledge and perception, and have infinite vigor and bliss. All Siddhas are equal, and there is no difference in their status.

2) Non-Liberated Living Beings

On the other side, non-liberated (worldly) jivas have karmas, and are continually going through the cycle of birth and death. They experience happiness and pain and have passions, which in turn cause the soul to wander more. Except for the jiva of Arihantas (Kevali), non-liberated jivas have limited knowledge and perception.

Jivas are found on earth, as well as in water, and air, and are scattered all over the universe. Human beings, celestial beings, infernal beings, animals, fish, birds, bugs, insects, plants, etc. are the most common forms of Jiva with which we can easily relate. However, Jain scriptures state that there are over all 8.4 million species of Jiva. They are known by the number of senses they possess. There are total five senses, namely touch, taste, smell, sight, and hearing. Different types of Jivas possess one or more of these senses.

Based upon the number of senses and mobility, Jivas are classified into different categories.

Based on mobility, all Jivas are divided into two broad categories:

- 1) **Non-Mobile Living Beings or Single Sensed, Sthavar, or Ekendriya Jiva**
These are living beings that move on their own. They have only one sense.
- 2) **Mobile Living Beings or Multi Sensed Being, Trasa Jiva, or Bahu Indriya**
These are living beings that can move on by themselves and have two to five senses.

1) **Non-Mobile Living Beings:**

These living beings have only one sense, the sense of touch. They are further divided into the following five sub-categories:

I. **Earth Bodied (Prithwikya) Jiva:**

Seemingly inanimate forms of earth are actually living beings, e.g. clay, sand, metal, coral, etc. They have earthly bodies, hence the name prithwikya which is derived from the Sanskrit term for earth, which is “prithwi”.

II. **Water Bodied (Apkya) Jiva:**

Seemingly inanimate forms of different types of water are living beings. Examples are dew, fog, iceberg, rain, etc. They have water bodies, hence the name apkya which is derived from the Sanskrit term for water, which is “ap”.

III. **Fire Bodied (Teukya) Jiva:**

Seemingly inanimate forms of different types of fires are living beings. Examples are flames, blaze, lightening, forest fire, hot ash, etc. They have fire bodies, hence the name teukya which is derived from the Sanskrit term for fire, which is “tejas”.

IV. **Air Bodied (Vayukya) Jiva:**

Seemingly inanimate forms of air are actually living beings. Examples are wind, whirlwinds, cyclones, etc. They have air bodies, hence the name vayukya which is derived from the Sanskrit term for gas, which is “vayu”.

V. **Plant Bodied (Vanaspatikya) Jiva:**

It is well known that plants grow; reproduce, die etc., and they are accepted as living beings. Trees, plants, branches, flowers, leaves, seeds, etc. are some examples of plant life. The Sanskrit term for plant is “vanaspati” and therefore such jivas are called vanaspatikya jiva.

A plant life can have one or more souls in a single body and, depending upon this, plant life is further divided into the following two sub-categories:

i. **Pratyek Vanaspatikya Jiva (One Soul Per Body):**

Pratyek means each or one. Such plant life has one soul in one body. Therefore, they are called pratyek vanaspatikya. Trees, plants, bushes, stem, branches, leaves, and seeds, etc., are all examples of pratyek vanaspatikya jiva.

ii. **Sadharan Vanaspatikya Jiva (Infinite Souls Per Body):**

Sadharan means common. In such plant life infinite souls share the same

body. This type of plant life is multi-organic. Therefore, such plant life is called sadharan vanaspatikya jiva. This kind of plant life have an infinite number of souls in one body are called "Anantkaya". Roots such as potatoes, carrots, onions, garlic, beats, etc., belong to this category.

2) **Mobile Living Being:**

Mobile jivas have two, three, four or all five senses and are divided into the following categories:

I. **Two Sensed Beings (Beindriya Jiva):**

Two sensed beings have the senses of touch and taste. Examples are shells, worms, insects, microbes in stale food, termites, etc.

II. **Three Sensed Beings (Treindriya Jiva):**

Three sensed beings have the senses of touch, taste, and smell. Examples are bugs, lice, white ants, moths, insects in wheat, grains, and centipedes, etc.

III. **Four Sensed Beings (Chaurindriya Jiva):**

Four sensed beings have the senses of touch, taste, smell and sight. Examples are scorpions, crickets, spiders, beetles, locusts, flies, etc.

IV. **Five Sensed Beings (Panchendriya Jiva):**

Five sensed beings have all the five senses of touch, taste, smell, sight, and hearing. Examples are human beings, cow, lions, fish, birds, etc.

The following are four sub-categories of the Panchendriya Jivas.

- a) **Naraki (Infernal)** - Jivas living in hell,
- b) **Tiryancha (Animals)** - Elephants, lions, birds, fish, insects, bugs, and plants, etc.,
- c) **Celestial** - Heavenly beings,
- d) **Manushya** - Human beings.

Among the five sensed beings some have mind (faculty of analytical thinking and control) and some do not. Those having a mind are called sangni panchendriya and those without a mind (faculty of analytical thinking) are called asangni panchendriya.

Among all of these Jivas celestial beings have the worldliest happiness. While infernal beings have the worldliest suffering. Neither celestial nor infernal beings can take vows, perform austerity, or possess restraint and therefore can not attain salvation during that life. Animals possess limited restraint only and, therefore, they also cannot attain salvation directly. The human state of existence is the most preferable to attain salvation, because during that life one can use logic to the fullest extent, can perform austerities, can live with restraint. Thus only through this human phase a jiva can attain liberation, salvation or Moksha, pure state of soul.