

# **A Scientific Study of Living Systems in Jainism**

**Dr. Narayan Lal Kachhara**

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## **Opinions of Scholars on the Book**

It is one of the sincere attempts to interlock two eras i.e. Jainism and science: one the ancient and other the modern, one with enormous faith and other with highly speculation, one with super-empirical and other with empirical evidence. Einstein once said that religion without science is lame and science without religion is blind. Dr. Narayan Lal Kachhara's effort is like eliminating the lameness and blindness of this era by coordinating Jain religion and philosophy with science. Many subtle and complicated issues related to physics, chemistry, cognitive science found in Jainism is being explained with correspondence to modern scientific terms with simplicity. Of course, it cannot be in existence without devotional hard work. This book can be said as base book for further scientific studies in Jainism.

**Samani Chaitanya Prajna**

Professor and Head, Department of Jainology and Comparative Religion and Philosophy, Executive Director, Bhagawan Mahaveer International Centre for Scientific Research and Social Innovative Studies, Jain Vishva Bharati Institute, Ladnun

This book, an excellent review of existing knowledge on living systems in Jainism, has been brought out against the backdrop of vast experience of author on the religion. It is an inspiring and practical book intended for researchers and for those who are looking into mysteries of life and relevance of our existence on the earth and other planets. Thus this thought provoking book is an excellent resource to students, educators and experts on the subjects....

I will conclude with that those who want a thorough review on the subject, this book is second to none and expect from author many more such contribution in future.

**Dr Pratap Sanchetee, MD, DM**

Consultant Neurologist,

Sanchetee Neurology Research Institute, Jodhpur

This book provides an extensive review of living systems in Jainism in the modern scientific context. This is a very original piece of work and covers several dimensions of living systems like consciousness, soul, karma theory, psychological aspects, knowledge, intelligence, emotions, quantum physics and others. I feel that this is the first serious attempt to study the possible interconnection between karma and soul diagrammatically in an easily understandable language. The scientific spirit behind this approach is a breakthrough in better understanding of dualism of soul and matter in the most systematic way. The description of forty seven characteristics of soul in Jainism on one hand and simultaneously description of consciousness touching the latest developments in the field including those of quantum physics, neurophysiology, psychology and finer structure of neurons will provide new insights to the world for further exploration of the concept of soul in Jainism and in the modern science. I wish that all intellectuals working in the multidisciplinary fields of soul, body, consciousness, biology, psychology, quantum physics and religion must read this book and take the search to understand living systems in the right direction.

**Dr. Surendra Singh Pokharna**

Former Scientist, Indian Space Research Organization, Ahmedabad

## **Preface**

“The existence of the soul has been accepted in most Indian philosophical traditions as well as Western religious traditions in some form. The soul is attributed with some properties that are not found in matter or other substances. Modern science has explored the realm of the physical order of existence in great detail and is trying to explain the processes taking place in the bodies of organisms on the basis of physical laws. Modern science accepts the property of consciousness as a special characteristic of living beings, but pleads that this is an emergent property of matter in some way. This theory, however, is not able to explain all of the observed phenomena and behavior in human beings and other organisms, and scientific opinion is divided on this particular issue. Some scientists do not hesitate to accept the existence of consciousness as a property independent of matter, but they are not able to offer any experimental proof for it. According to Jainism and other Indian philosophies, consciousness is a property of the soul, and the soul, being non-physical, cannot be directly verified by experiments.

This perspective makes it very interesting to study the concepts of Jain philosophy in the light of modern science, to highlight the properties of the soul which are exclusive to it but important to understand the structure, processes and other phenomena taking place in living organisms.”

“As the soul is non-corporeal, the traditional scientific methods of experimentation (in the laboratory) fail to study the combination of soul and matter. A different technique based on direct cognition is

needed to access the soul, but this is beyond the scope of science. This subjective method does not have the approval of science, which believes only in objective methods. Knowledge of the composite structures made by the combination of the soul and matter, i.e. living organisms, is far more complex than the knowledge of matter alone. The true knowledge of such structures is obtained in the omniscient state, so it is beyond verification by the traditional methods of experimentation used by science. This direct method of cognition reveals the true knowledge of Nature, which takes into account all six substances, their interplay and their interactions. It is this knowledge that Jain philosophy presents to us, and it is a treasure for all of humanity. “

“A living organism is not merely an integration of limbs and flesh, as assumed by science, but it is the abode of the soul. An organism is a living system consisting of three main sub-systems: the soul, the gross body, and the subtle body. All of these components have their particular properties, but they are interrelated in their functioning. In isolation, no component can completely describe the organism. The performance of the living system can be understood only through a holistic approach studying each component in relation to the other components. The reductionist approach of modern science, which studies the gross body alone, cannot provide information about all aspects of this system. Jainism follows an integrated approach and describes the organism as a system that yields complete knowledge of its working and performance. However, modern science has discovered many details of the gross body which are not available in the Jain scriptures; it is therefore desirable to study the information available in the Jain texts and scientific literature and correlate them to enhance our understanding of the behavior of the organism. The body of a human being is so complex that only a few aspects have been discovered by modern science. For example, it has a strong immune system that protects it from the attacks of bacteria, viruses, the environment, and disorders produced in the body itself. Without this self-healing power, the body could not survive. This is only a tiny indication of the might of the soul; its powers are boundless. With further progress in science we may expect to know more about it, but it is impossible that all aspects of the body shall be discovered by a scientific approach. It is necessary to take into account the presence of the soul and the subtle body to gain a full understanding of the living system.”

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