

CONCEPT OF ATMA (SOUL) IN AYURVEDA: A REVIEW**Kamath Nagaraj¹, Patel Yasesh², Rateesh C T³, Kulkarni Pratibha⁴**^{1,2,3}P.G.Scholar, ⁴Associate. Professor & Head, Department of Shareera Kriya, Sri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara College of Ayurveda & Hospital, Hassan, Karnataka, India**ABSTRACT**

Ayurveda the science of life and treatment, where in treatment is possible only in the living. *Ayu* is nothing but *Chetananuvrutti*(continuity of life). *Atma* is said as *Chetana* and *Karta*, in the entire universe the *Atma* is only the *Chaitanyabhava* and rest of all are *Achetana* or *Jada*.

The synonyms point towards the fact that *Atma* has been at times taken to mean *Manas*, at times to mean *Shareera*, and at times to mean *Indriya*. The *Atma* is actually an entity different than these: Dead bodies don't exhibit life. Hence body and *Atma* are separate entities; *Indriyaabhigahaata* creates *Blidness*, deafness etc but the previous knowledge of *Indriyas* is maintained intact, showing that *Atma* and *Indriya* too are separate entities. The types, number, and *Parimaana* point towards an understanding that: *Atma* is one and All pervading; types are only *Upaadhi Bheda*.

By the opinions of *Sthana* of *Atma*, we can say that *Atma* being all pervading, it is present all over the body in each *Anu*. It being independent of form makes its abode too unlimited. That is, it is widespread everywhere. It is only for our better understanding that we limit it within bodies of living creatures. The origin of *Atma* is impossible to trace due to its eternity. It could be contextually taken as its origin with every new birth of a living thing i.e; at the time of entry of semen into yoni even *Atma* is said to enter.

Keywords: *Atma*, Soul, *Ayurveda*, *Chetana*, *Vibhu*

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda the science of life and treatment, where in treatment is possible only in the living. *Ayu* is nothing but *Chetananuvrutti*(continuity of life). Only till the time the body has *Chetana*(*Atma~soul*) it's said to be living and it is a subject to treatment. The factor that pervades all over the body or world is known as *Atma*. The word *Atma* is derived from the "Ath" or "Ap" *dhatu* meaning which spreads all over and moving forever respectively. The *Atma* is *Nirantara*(eternal). The four features of *Atma* are Spreads all over, moulds all things into its

form, it enjoys the previous deeds, it is eternal.

DEFINITION OF ATMA

Atma is said as *Chetana* and *Karta*, in the entire universe the *Atma* is only the *Chaitanyabhava* (sign of life)and rest of all are *Achetana* or *Jada*(non living). It means that *Atma* is a factor which has complete proficiency over the eternal knowledge (*Iha* and *Para*) hence this is known as *Karta*, *Jnyata*, *Bhokta*. The word *Atma* denotes, the *Atmatva Jati* means its entire species. The *Atmatva Jati* doesn't have *Samaveta* rela-

tion, with *Murta Dravyas*, these are only media for its spread¹.

Manas, Indriya, Artha are known as *Karana* and *Atma* is their *Adhistata* or *Karta* or Master. The *Atma* is unmanifested, eternal, all pervading and unchanged. The *Atma*

with the help of *Karana* or *Gneya* (*Shareera, Manas, Indriya, Artha*) gets success in attaining the knowledge. *Shri Krishna* says that the *Jeevatma* is the fraction of his *Chaitanya(Paramatma)*².

Table 1: Meaning of synonyms of Atma

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The life force in the body. • The supreme soul of souls. • Vitality. • Which provides vitality to Indriya • Which provides life to panchamahabhoota. • The life force in the body. • Cause of life. • One which has life by virtue of soul. • Which resides in the body. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proficiency of knowledge • No adhesion of vikara or dosha • Superior or supreme. • Non destructible. • Controller. • The cause of creation. • Pervading in entire universe. • As closely associated with mind. • Cause for origin of life. • Knower of everything. • Which resides in the body.
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Table 2: Types of Atma

<i>Kanada</i>	<i>Ayurveda</i>	<i>Vishnu Purana</i>	<i>Bhagavat Gita</i>
<i>Jeevatma</i>	<i>Jeevatma</i>	<i>Bhutatma</i>	Observer
<i>Paramatma</i>	<i>Paramatma</i>	<i>Indriyatma</i>	Permits action of mind
	<i>Athivahika purusha</i>	<i>Pradhanatma</i>	Master
		<i>Jeevatma</i>	The almighty
		<i>Paramatma</i>	Enjoyer
			The soul of souls

Upanishads believe *Atma* is one and all pervading. Just as moon is one but several images will be seen in various pools and rivers similarly *Atma* though single has its images in each individual living being. The Vedanta too believes *Atma* is all pervading and one. Just as *Akasha* though one, is classified as *Ghatakasha Mathakasha* even *Atma* has *Upadi Bhedas*³.

JEEVATMA

It is different in different bodies, all pervading and eternal. It is master of body. Experiences his own *Karma*. Attains knowledge of body only. Less energetic than pa-

ramatma. Proficient in attaining knowledge with the help of *Shareera, Manas, Indriya*, etc; because it is lame. Has inseperable relation with *Icha, Dwesha, Sukha, Dukha* etc⁴. *Sukshma Sharira* carries the *Karma Shesha* to the other new body after death along with 17 *Tattvas*, they are 4 *Tanmatra* , 10 *Indriya* , *Manas* , *Buddhi* and *Ahankara*. It also associates with eight *Bhavas* they are *Dharma, Adharma, Gnana, Agnana, Vairagya, Avairagya, Aishwarya, Anaishwarya*. It always associates with *Sthoola Shareera*.

It constitutes *Manomaya Kosha* and *Vignanamaya Kosha* or *Anthakarana Cha-*

tustaya which are *Manas* for *Samshaya Gnana*, *Buddhi* for *Nirnaya Gnana*, *Ahamkara* for pride and *Citta* for memory.

It records the memory and carries the imprints of previous birth to new body in subtle form after the death hence called as *Karana Shareera*.

PARAMATMA

It is superior soul of all souls. Absolute knower of creation. Utmost energetic. Neither born nor die- eternal. Supreme source of knowledge. No adhesion of *Vikara* or *Dosha*⁵.

ATMOTPATTI & STHANA

The *Atma* is neither born nor it dies so said to be *Anadi* and *Ananta* i.e; eternal or *Nitya*. But here we may consider *Utpatti* as the entry of *Atma* in the body. During the time of coitus with the entry of semen into yoni the *Ksetrajna* too enters⁶.

Hrudaya is the seat of *Atma*. *Atma* resides in *Hrudaya* and *Buddhi*, it is responsible for *Smruti* and *Gnana*⁷. It is known as *Eshwara* or *Narayana*. *Atma* present in the body like *Taila* in *Tila*, ghee in curds, water in *Srotas* of river and *Agni* in *Arani*. It is *Vibhu* and *Avyaya*, hence it is invisible to ordinary eyes. Visible only to *Divya Chakshu* of *Yogi* by *Tapas* or *Yogabhyasa*⁸.

ATMA PARIMANA & LAKSHANA

Atma is smaller in smaller things and bigger in bigger things. *Charaka* says *Atma* is *Vibhu* and hence *Sarvagata* and *Mahan* in *Parimana*. *Ramanuja* and *Vedantins* mention *Anu Pramana*. *Jains* mention *Madhyama Pramana*. *Nyaya* and *Vaisheshikas* mention *Mahat Parimana*. A few opine it is of *Angustha Pramana*, and also as the tip of paddy grain. It blazes like rising sun⁹.

Atma exists in *Samavaya* relation with *Jnyana*. *Atma* is without adhesions, Prime, Eter-

nal, Life force, Observer and associates with *Manas*, *Panchabhutas*, *Trigunas* and *Indriyas* for attaining knowledge¹⁰.

ATMA KARMA & IMPORTANCE

Light, Darkness, Truthfulness, Lies, good and bad deeds are all due to *Atma*. At the time of death the *Atma* goes out of the body along with the four *Bhutas* with the speed of mind and takes up a new body for *Bhoga* of karma *Phala* of previous body. The *Atma* is responsible for *Jnyana* which it attains due to its association with the *Karanas*¹¹.

The *Atma* is the vital force, it is *Pumaan* (along with *Shareera* and *Satva*). It is the main *Adhikarana* of this *Ayurveda Shastra*. It is for this *Pumaan* that this *Shastra* has been profounded.

In *Ayurveda*, *Atma* is considered as one among nine *Karana Dravyas* as it provides vitality and life to the *Mahabhutas*, it is quoted just after them in order¹². These nine are the *Karana* for *Sruthi*. Based on presence or absence of *Indria* vitalized by the *Atma*, the *Karya Dravyas* are classified as *Chetana* and *Achetana* respectively.

While mentioning about *Chikitsaadhikruta Purusha*, whether the 24 or 25 *Tattva Purusha* or *Ek Dhatuja Purusha*, presence of *Atma* is unrefutable. Thus, *Chikitsa* too is done to *Shareera* only when associated with *Atma* not otherwise. The concept of rebirth too is due to *Atma* leaving a body on death and getting a new body in the form of rebirth for *Bhoga* of *Karmaphala* of previous births. The *Atma* is the *Jnyanadikarana* In attainment of knowledge the role of *Atma* is greatest as it is *Atma* which gets the knowledge and it initiates the process of *Jnyanotpathi* too¹³.

DISCUSSION

Gamana in context of derivation of *Atma* could be understood as : Movement of *Atma* from one *Deha* to other i.e; Rebirth; Movement of *Atma* with mind in dreams; Movement from one *Indriya* to other for grasping specific *Indriyarthas*; Movement of *Atma* within the body from birth towards death.

The synonyms point towards the fact that *Atma* has been at times taken to mean *Manas*, at times to mean *Shareera*, and at times to mean *Indriya*. The *Atma* is actually an entity different than these: Dead bodies don't exhibit life. Hence body and *Atma* are separate entities; *Indriyaabhigata* creates blindness, deafness etc but the previous knowledge of *Indriyas* is maintained intact, showing that *Atma* and *Indriya* too are separate entities; The *Ahamkara*, *Dehaantara Gati*, and *Chaitanya* are not due to *Manas* but due to *Atma*.

Though in synonyms *Bheejadhatu*, *Bheejadharmas* (cause for origin of life) has been used for *Atma* *Ayurveda* says it is *Prakriti* which is capable of production and not *Purusha*. In fact *Charaka* considers only 24 *Tattvas* merging both *Prakriti* and *Purusha* into one that is *Avyakta* as the cause for creation.

The types, number, and *Parimaana* point towards an understanding that: *Atma* is one and All pervading; types are only *Upaadhi Bheda*.

By the opinions of *Sthana* of *Atma*, we can say that *Atma* being all pervading, it is present all over the body in each *Anu*. It being independent of form makes its abode too unlimited. That is, it is widespread everywhere. It is only for our better understanding

that we limit it within bodies of living creatures.

The origin of *Atma* is impossible to trace due to its eternity. It could be contextually taken as its origin with every new birth of a living thing i.e; at the time of entry of semen into yoni even *Atma* is said to enter¹⁴.

CONCLUSION

Atma is a *Dravya*, responsible for life and activity. Its presence is essential for Life, for Attaining Knowledge, for Birth and Rebirth. Thus it is the Most Important among the nine *Karana Dravyas*. The synonyms point towards the fact that *Atma* has been at times taken to mean *Manas*, at times to mean *Shareera*, and at times to mean *Indriya*. The *Atma* is actually an entity different than these: Dead bodies don't exhibit life. Hence body and *Atma* are separate entities; *Indriyaabhigata* creates blindness, deafness etc but the previous knowledge of *Indriyas* is maintained intact, showing that *Atma* and *Indriya* too are separate entities. The types, number, and *Parimaana* point towards an understanding that: *Atma* is one and All pervading; types are only *Upaadhi Bheda*.

By the opinions of *Sthana* of *Atma*, it seems more logical to say *Atma* being all pervading, it is present all over the body in each *Anu*. It being independent of form makes its abode too unlimited. That is, it is widespread everywhere. It is only for our better understanding that we limit it within bodies of living creatures. The origin of *Atma* is impossible to trace due to its eternity. It could be contextually taken as its origin with every new birth of a living thing i.e;

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