



Comparative Study on 'Doctrine of Atman' as discussed in Charaka Samhita and Srimad Bhagavad Gita

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DOI:10.21760/jaims.10.3.46

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Introduction: The doctrine of Atman or supreme soul forms the foundation of metaphysics as well as ontology of both Ayurveda and Vedanta philosophy. Charaka Samhita and Srimad Bhagavad Gita being the central texts of Ayurveda and Vedanta philosophy respectively, addresses the doctrine of Atman with their unique approach. The similarities regarding the different aspects of the Atman between Charaka Samhita and Bhagavad Gita indicates towards the fact that, the metaphysical background of Charaka Samhita has been greatly influenced by Vedanta philosophy.

Discussion: Charaka Samhita describes the Atman as Avyakta (un-manifested), Ksetraja (knower of creation), Shashwata (eternal), Vibhu (universal) and Avyaya (indestructible). Acharya Charaka has accepted Atman as Aprabhava (beginning less), Anadi (has no beginning), Nitya (eternal), Bhavad Agrahyam (unperceivable by anything), Avyaya (indestructible), Chetanavana (conscious), Karta (supreme agent of action), Sarvagato (all pervasive), Sakshi (eternal witness) and Dehi (embodied). Charaka Samhita has described the characteristics of both Nirguna Atman or Paramatman as well as Saguna Atman or Jivatman simultaneously. Throughout the compendium, multiple arguments have been placed in support of the views like existence of Atman, eternity of Atman, consciousness of Atman, changelessness of Atman, all pervasive nature of Atman etc. Similarly in Bhagavad Gita, Sri Krishna has also described Atman as the only real self and supreme reality. Sri Krishna described Atman as the eternal, immortal, changeless reality as well as everlasting, indestructible, indeterminable reality. On comparative studies between these two compendiums one will notice that, both of them has described Atman as un-manifested, eternal, everlasting, indestructible, having independent existence, all pervasive, beginning-less, end-less, immutable reality.

Conclusion: This present study indicates that, the doctrine of Atman as discussed in Charaka Samhita is by far large inspired by the principles of Vedanta philosophy. Thus, such comparative study will help us to understand the influence of Vedanta philosophy on Charaka Samhita as well as to establish a separate ontological view of Ayurveda, comprising concepts of multiple philosophical school as adopted in Ayurveda.

Keywords: Atman, Atma, supreme soul, consciousness, Charaka Samhita, Bhagavad Gita

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How to Cite this Article

Ray S, Saha S, Comparative Study on 'Doctrine of Atman' as discussed in Charaka Samhita and Srimad Bhagavad Gita. J Ayu Int Med Sci. 2025;10(3):300-317.
Available From
<https://jaims.in/jaims/article/view/4211/>

To Browse



Manuscript Received
2025-02-10

Review Round 1
2025-02-25

Review Round 2
2025-03-05

Review Round 3
2025-03-15

Accepted
2025-03-25

Conflict of Interest
None

Funding
Nil

Ethical Approval
Not required

Plagiarism X-checker
13.41

Note



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Introduction

Charaka Samhita defines *Ayurveda* as the science where advantageous and disadvantageous as well as happy and unhappy states of life, along with what is good and bad for life, its measurement and life itself are described.[1] So, *Ayurveda* stands for knowledge of life as stated by *Acharya Chakrapani Dutta*. [2] But what is this life - *Ayu* as it is called? Again *Charaka Samhita* describes *Ayu* or life as the combination of the *Sharira* (body), *Indriya* (sensory organs), *Sattva* (mind) and *Atman* (absolute soul). [3] In another place in the same compendium *Ayu* has been described as continuity of *Chetana* i.e., consciousness. [4] So, *Atman* (soul) or *Chetana* (consciousness) forms the substratum of *Ayu*, which is the main object of this science of life known as *Ayurveda*. Every science is governed by some distinct philosophical principles. Right from the inception of *Ayurveda*, through its development across the ages, the fundamental principles of *Ayurveda* have been influenced and enriched by the thoughts and logics from different Indian philosophical schools like *Nyaya*, *Vaisheshika*, *Samkhya* and *Vedanta* schools of philosophy along with Buddhism. By incorporating different principles altogether *Ayurveda* has moulded them into basic and applied aspect of different physiological, pharmacological, pathological and therapeutic process. Thus, *Ayurveda* has developed its own distinct as well as unique set of philosophical understandings. So, we can say that, the philosophy of *Ayurveda* is not a new one but it is based on the observations and principles of different age old Indian philosophical schools. The basic difference between these philosophical schools and *Ayurveda* probably lies in the fact that, rather limiting itself into the theoretical observations and analysis, *Ayurveda* has applied these philosophical thoughts practically to obtain the knowledge of *Trisutra - Hetu* (causative factors of diseases), *Linga* (clinical features of diseases) and *Aoushadha* (therapeutic remedies of diseases). *Srimad Bhagavad Gita* is considered as probably the most sacred text of not only Hinduism but among the entire Indian subcontinent irrespective of people's religious belief. The *Bhagavad Gita* has been compared with the milk taken out of cow, meaning the *Vedas* and *Upanishads*, by *Sri Krishna*, the milk man. This milk refers the eternal *Vedantic* knowledge which has been enriching mankind century after centuries.

Philosophically *Bhagavad Gita* represents the *Vedanta* philosophy and considered as one of the three canon (*Trayo Prasthan*) of literature; known as *Smriti Prasthan* (i.e., moral and ethical guiding), other two being the *Brahma Sutra* (known as *Nyaya Prasthan* - logical arguments) and *Upanishads* (known as *Shruti Prasthan* - axiom of revelations).

The principles and understanding of any philosophical school should be studied from perspective of epistemology, metaphysics and axiology. Ontology is considered as sub-discipline of metaphysics focused on most general features of reality. Ontological study should be able to address the metaphysical questions like nature of existence, concept of time - space - causation, laws of nature etc. *Bhagavad Gita* represents *Vedantic* ontological views on *Atman* - soul or real self. Throughout eighteen chapters of *Bhagavad Gita*, mentioning about doctrine of *Atman* comes again and again, but in second chapter, this entire doctrine of *Atman* has been discussed elaborately by *Sri Krishna*. Likewise, in *Charaka Samhita* also discussion on *Atman* can be found in several places, but primarily eight chapters of *Sharirasthan* along with couple of chapters from *Sutrasthan* form the basis of studies on *Atman* in *Charaka Samhita*. To understand doctrine better, along with original texts, the commentaries on those texts should also be studied. In this study authors have gone through various commentaries of *Bhagavad Gita*, among which *Adi Shankaracharya's* commentary being the principal one. Likewise *Chakrapani Dutta's* commentary on *Charaka Samhita* has also been studied. Many similarities and dissimilarities in the doctrine of *Atman* can be found between the *Bhagavad Gita* and *Charaka Samhita*. For instance, in both the compendiums *Atman* has been referred as *Anadi* (beginningless), *Avyaya* (undecaying), *Chetana* (pure consciousness), *Akshara* (imperishable), *Kshetraja* (knower of the corpus), *Shaswata* (everlasting) etc. Likewise, where *Atman* has been accepted as the principal doer in *Charaka Samhita*, *Bhagavad Gita* denies its role as doer. The authors have presented the doctrine of *Atman* as discussed in these two compendiums in chronological way for better understanding. Thus, studying the doctrine of *Atman* as discussed in *Charaka Samhita* in comparison with *Bhagavad Gita* helps us to understand the ontological view of *Charaka Samhita* better along with its uniqueness as well as influence of *Vedanta* philosophy on it.

Discussion

Doctrine of Atman in Charaka Samhita:

In *Charaka Samhita*, the 'doctrine of Atman (absolute soul)' has been primarily discussed in relation with the 'doctrine of Purusha' apart from few sporadic occasions. It has been said that, *Purusha* is the combination of *Sattva* (mind), *Atma* (soul) and *Sharira* (physical body), is sentient and the subject matter of this *Veda* (*Ayurveda*); it is for this (*Purusha*) that this *Veda* (*Ayurveda*) has come into existence.[5] Again, the combination of these three factors namely *Sattva*, *Atma* and *Sharira* in addition with *Indriya* (sensory organs) has been termed as *Ayu* (span of life)[6] and it has been said that, the science which imparts knowledge about *Ayu* is known as *Ayurveda*. [7] So, it can be hypothetically said, the terms *Purusha* and *Ayu* have been conversely used in *Charaka Samhita*. This *Purusha* is further referred as *Rashi Purusha* like: "once upon a time sages assembled together before Lord *Punarvasu*. There a discussion on the determination of the origin of *Rashi Purusha* which is an aggregate of *Atma*, *Indriya*, *Mana* and *Artha* (objects of senses) was discussed".[8] In *Sharirasthana*, *Acharya Charaka* has discussed different concepts about *Purusha* like *Shadadhatuja Purusha*, *Chaturvimshatika Purusha* and *Ekadhatuja Purusha*. *Shadadhatuja Purusha* comprises six *Dhatus* i.e., five *Mahabhutas* (elements) and *Chetana* (pure consciousness).[9] Again, the element of pure consciousness alone has been referred as *Purusha* or *Ekadhatuja Purusha*. Whereas conglomeration of 24 different elements like *Mana* (mind), *Dasha Indriya* (five sense and five motor organs), *Indriyārtha* (five objects of senses) and *Prakriti* (comprising *Avyakta* + *Mahata* + *Ahamkara* + *Pancha Mahabhuta*) has been termed as *Chaturvimshatika Purusha*. [10] If we analyse all of these descriptions of *Purusha* we can come to this conclusion that the same element of pure consciousness has been termed as *Atma* in the definition of *Purusha*, *Chetana* in the definition of *Shadadhatuja Purusha* and *Avyakta* in the definition of *Chaturvimshatika Purusha*. This element of pure consciousness has been also termed as exclusive attribute of *Atma* (soul).[11] In different classical schools of Indian Philosophy this element of pure consciousness has been termed differently like *Atman* in *Nyaya*, *Purusha* in *Samkhya* and *Yoga* as well as *Brahman* and *Atman* in *Vedanta*.

It has been accepted in *Charaka Samhita* that this *Purusha* as *Chetana* i.e., element of pure consciousness or *Atma* i.e., absolute soul is not the subject for treatment rather *Rashi Purusha* which is the conglomeration of 24 different objects is the subject for treatment in *Ayurveda*. We will discuss this doctrine of *Atman* or the absolute as well as empirical soul as propounded by *Charaka Samhita* under following headings:

Concept of Atman:

The *Chetana Dhatu* (element of pure consciousness) which constitutes *Rashi Purusha* and *Shadadhatuja Purusha* along with which has been alone referred as *Ekadhatuja Purusha* or *Shuddha Purusha* - should be accepted as *Atman* or *Atma* as propounded by *Charaka Samhita*. The same *Atman* has been regarded as *Avyakta* in constitution of *Chaturvimshatika Purusha* as *Acharya Charaka* mentioned: "the *Atman* (absolute soul) is *Avyakta* (un-manifested), *Ksetraja* (knower of creation), *Shashwata* (eternal), *Vibhu* (universal) and *Avyaya* (indestructible). The manifested creation (empirical soul) is of course otherwise. Another way of distinguishing manifested things from un-manifested one is that former can be perceived by sense faculties, while latter is transcendental in nature & is perceptible; it can only be inferred".[12]

Acharya Chakrapani has very eloquently pointed out the relation and distinction between *Purusha* and *Atman* as: "the term *Purusha* implies the 'empirical soul' as distinct from the twenty four elements. *Purusha* represents the 'element of consciousness' i.e., soul different from body. Accepting element of consciousness as *Purusha* is as per the legacy of the ancient preceptors as suggested by the term '*Smrita*' in the verse. Even the element of consciousness is known as *Purusha* as corroborated from the traditional etymology viz. "*Puri Sharire Shete Iti*" (one who sleeps in the body). According to this definition, *Purusha* is something altogether detached from the body. This is how *Purusha* has also been defined in other scriptures. But as a matter of fact, it is the *Purusha* comprising six *Dhatus* who comes under the purview of the science of medicine and not the *Purusha* who is detached from the body".[13] According to *Vedanta* philosophy, this *Atman* is considered to be existed in two levels of reality: 1. one at the level of *Paramarthika Satta* (absolute existence) - at this level it is called *Paramatma* (absolute soul).

It is attribute less and often called *Nirguna Brahman*. It has been regarded as the supreme reality. 2. At the level of *Vyavaharika Satta* (worldly existence) - at this level it is called as *Jivatma* (empirical soul). It is in contact with different contributes and often termed as *Saguna Brahman*. In Bhagavad Gita, this *Jivatma* has been often referred as *Dehi* (the embodied one) or *Idam* (which can be pointed out). The element of consciousness or empirical soul which constitutes *Ekadhatuja Purusha*, *Sadadhatuja Purusha* and *Rashi Purusha* can be correlated with *Jivatma*. Discriminating absolute soul from empirical soul, Acharya Charaka has said: "the absolute soul is one and only. He is inaccessible by any signs or symptoms. Being inaccessible he has no sensation. It is only the contactual or the empirical soul who has sensations. For these sensations do not constitute the attributes of the soul as such. They in fact arise out of the contacts (of the sense organs with their objects)". [14]

This *Atman* has been considered as '*Nirvikara*' i.e., devoid of any changes and '*Sarvabhutanam Nirvishesha*' i.e. its presence in different types of creatures does not bear any distinction.[15] It appears to have distinction only on account of the specific features of body and mind of different types of creatures. Acharya Chakrapani commented that, "this *Atman* is present in all creatures alike. Specific characteristics of the body and the mind are responsible for causing happiness and miseries in living beings and because of these specific features the *Atman* appears to have distinction in different creatures. But this is not correct. Happiness etc. are not related with *Paramatman*; they are described here to be only the attributes of intellect".[16] Supporting the view that *Atman* is governed by law of causality, Acharya Chakrapani commented that, "righteous and unrighteous acts are responsible for birth in the wombs of different species like Gods and animals. Soul is the root of these righteous and unrighteous acts; hence soul is considered to be ultimately responsible for taking birth in different wombs".[17] Later he contradicts this opinion as: "in *Sharirasthana*, 3rd chapter, verse no. 10, certain factors are described to be derived from *Atman*. These factors are actually not derived from *Paramatman*. But the virtuous or sinful disposition which are results of impairment of mind because of predominance of *Sattva*, *Rajas* or *Tamas* are responsible for manifestation of all these factors.

On minute analysis, the factors described to have been derived from the *Atman* are actually derived from the mind. Therefore, the deformities / rearrangements of these factors said to be derived from *Atman* should be considered to be the same as those of the mind".[18] Acharya Charaka himself accepts the fact that, *Atman* is not governed by the law of causality and it is has no bondage under the rule of *Karma* by saying: "the *Atman* is absolutely free to act as it pleases. It is however obliged to enjoy the fruits of his own action. It is also free to control its mind and to get rid of the results of good or bad acts of its own".[19] Accepting the view that *Atman* is beyond the law of causality and does not suffer from any positive or negative effect of the work done in previous life, it has been denied as the seat of any ailment or misery in multiple places of *Charaka Samhita* like *Sutrasthana*, chapter 1, verse 55; chapter 20, verse 3; *Vimansthana*, chapter 6, verse 3; *Sharirasthana*, chapter 1, verse 136; *Chikitsasthana*, chapter 3, verse 12 etc.

Characteristics of Atman:

In *Sutrasthana* 1st chapter, Acharya Charaka has described the characteristics of *Atman* as: "*Nirvikara* (devoid of any changes), *Sattvabhuta Gunendriyai Chaitanye Karanam* (it is the cause of consciousness through the mind and specific qualities of basic elements), *Nitya* (eternal) and *Drashta Pashyati Hi Kriya* (it is the observer of all activities)".[20] Again, in *Sharirasthana* 1st chapter, Acharya Charaka has mentioned some more characteristics of *Atman* referring other scholars as: "the knower of *Atman* describes it as *Nishkriya* (devoid of any activity), *Swatantra* (having independent existence), *Vashina* (absolutely free), *Sarvaga* (all pervasive), *Vibhu* (omnipresent), *Kshetraja* (knower of the body) and *Sakshi* (eternal witness)".[21] Later in this same chapter, Acharya Charaka has described *Atman* as *Aprabhava* (beginning less), *Anadi* (has no beginning), *Nitya* (eternal), *Bhavad Agrahyam* (unperceivable by anything), *Avyakta* (unmanifested), *Kshetraja* (knower of the body), *Shaswata* (eternal), *Avyaya* (indestructible), *Chetanavana* (conscious), *Karta* (supreme agent of action), *Sarvagato* (all pervasive), *Vibhu* (omnipresent), *Sakshi* (eternal witness) and *Dehi* (embodied).[22] Thereafter in *Sharirasthana* 3rd chapter, Acharya Charaka has addressed the characteristics of *Atman* with multiple adjectives like: *Na Cha Atmanaatmanam Janayati* (*Atman* is not produced by another *Atman*),

Garbhatma (Atman within foetus), *Antaratma* (Atman within animal body), *Jiva* (animal soul), *Shashwata* (eternal), *Arujam* (devoid of misery), *Ajaram* (devoid of senility), *Amaram* (conqueror of death), *Akshayam* (devoid of decay), *Abhedyam* (cannot be penetrated), *Achhedyam* (cannot be cut down), *Alodyam* (cannot be made to get irritated), *Vishwarupa* (omnipresent), *Vishwakarma* (omnipotent), *Avyaktam* (invisible), *Anadi* (beginning less), *Anidhanam* (endless), *Aksharam* (changeless), *Drasta* (eternal witness), *Gya* (omniscient), *Prakriti* (primary cause) and *Karana* (efficient cause).[23]

Some more characteristics of Atman has been described by *Acharya Charaka* in the subsequent chapter i.e. 4th chapter of *Sharirasthana* like: *Chetana Dhatu* (element of consciousness), *Hetu* (concomitant cause), *Karana* (non-constituent cause), *Nimitta* (efficient cause), *Aksharam* (the indestructible), *Karta* (agent of action), *Manta* (thinker), *Vedita* (knower), *Boddha* (intelligent), *Drashta* (observer), *Dhata* (supporter), *Brahma* (creator), *Vishwakarma* (omnipotent), *Vishwarupa* (omnipresent), *Purusha* (supreme personality), *Prabhava* (source of origin), *Avyaya* (immutable), *Nitya* (eternal), *Guni* (the receptacle of *Mahabhutas*), *Grahana* (one having capacity to unite the *Mahabhutas*), *Pradhana* (nature), *Avyakta* (unmanifested), *Jeeva* (the animated one), *Gya* (conscious one), *Pudgala* (the ego), *Chetanavan* (one having the power of sensation), *Vibhu* (omnipresent), *Bhutatman* (empirical soul), *Indriyatman* (organic soul) and *Antaratman* (inner soul).[24]

Apart from the above adjectives, multiple other adjectives have been found to be used to describe the characteristics of Atman in various other places of *Charaka Samhita* like: *Niravayava* (formless), *Sukshma* (minute), *Shanta* (stupor), *Sarva Samyoga Rahita* (devoid of all attachments), *Chetana* (pure consciousness), *Prajapati* (the creator), *Vishnu* (the creator), *Nirdosha* (devoid of all faults), *Nishpriha* (devoid of all stimulation) etc. Analysing all these characteristics of Atman as described by *Acharya Charaka*, we can come to the conclusion that, *Acharya Charaka* has followed the tradition of *Vedanta* philosophy while propounding the doctrine of Atman. Some of these characteristics are used to describe the real nature of Atman while some others are used to describe the embodied form.

Thus, we can say, *Acharya Charaka* has described the characteristics of both *Nirguna Atman* or *Paramatman* as well as *Saguna Atman* or *Jivatman* simultaneously.

Existence of Atman:

The existence of Atman is a matter of long debate and scepticism right from the inception of philosophy. In *Katha Upanishada*, *Yama* was asked by *Nachiketa*, "when a man dies there is this doubt: some say that he (as Atman) exists; some others say that he does not exist".[25] In one of the earliest verse from *Rigveda*, *Nasadiya Sukta* the same element of scepticism about the existence of Atman has been expressed as: "*Ko Addha Veda Ka Iha Pravachat*" - who really knows or who can really say?[26] The non-existence of Atman has been propounded by the *Charvaka* community from the very beginning and later by *Buddhist* philosophers also.

Mentioning the opinions of nihilists like *Charvaka* community, *Acharya Charaka* has said: "for a nihilist everything happens accidentally, so for him there is no existence of Atman".[27] *Acharya Charaka* blatantly rejects such opinions of nihilists and atheists saying "Nihilism constitutes the worst of the sinful"[28] and "they should be rejected".[29]

Acharya Charaka has also rejected the momentariness of Atman as propounded by *Buddhist* scholars by saying this: "in view of those who don't recognise the existence of Atman the other similar products will enjoy the fruits of action done by their other predecessors. In fact, there may be difference in instrumental organs of the doer but the doer is the same all along. The doer equipped with instruments become the cause of all actions".[30] However *Acharya Charaka* has accepted the momentariness of other physical objects apart from Atman: "the time taken for destruction of an entity is shorter even than a twinkling of eye, the destroyed entities don't emerge again and one's action is not fructify in others - this is the view held by the knowers of reality. On this basis, the *Purusha*, the eternal one is regarded as the cause of living beings in their actions and enjoyments".[31] Thus, *Acharya Charaka* has accepted the existence and eternal nature of Atman as the only non-changing reality within ever-changing physical matters of body. This Atman has been regarded as the doer and receiver of all actions.

When this *Atman* has been accepted as something apart from the physical body of all sentient beings, then only the egotism (*Ahamkar*), fruit of action (*Phala*), actions (*Karma*), migration to the body (*Dehantara Gati*) and memory (*Smriti*) of all sentient beings can be justified as mentioned by *Acharya Charaka*. [32]

Eternality of Atman:

According to *Acharya Charaka*, "the absolute soul (*Atman*) which is beginning less is eternal but that which is a product of a cause is contrary (non-eternal). One which is not caused by any factor is ever existing and eternal ...". [33] Later he also mentioned: "the absolute soul (*Atman*) cannot be perceived by anything, for eternity is not caused by anything. So, the absolute soul (*Atman*) is unmanifested (*Avyaktam*) and imperceptible (*Achintyam*)". [34] Throughout the entire compendium, *Acharya Charaka* has accepted the eternity of *Atman* by using several adjectives like *Nitya* (Ch.Su.1/53, Ch.Sh.4/8,5/16) and *Shaswata* (Ch.Sh.1/61,3/14). Metaphysically the object which is considered to be internal should have no beginning and end. In accordance with this view *Acharya Charaka* has denied the origination of absolute soul by referring *Atman* as *Anadi* (beginning-less) (Ch.Su.11/13, Ch.Sh.1/53,59,82, Ch.Sh.3/14) and *Ajata* (which was not created) (Ch.Sh.3/14) as well as denied the destruction of absolute soul by referring *Atman* with several adjectives like *Anidhana*, *Amara*, *Amrita*, *Akshyaya*, *Akshara* etc. (Ch.Sh.1/156, 3/14, 4/7, 5/11, 5/23). Further he makes a distinction between absolute soul (*Atman*) and empirical soul (*Purusha*) by saying: "as the supreme soul (*Atman*) is beginning less, no birth as such can be ascribed to him. Of course, the empirical soul (*Purusha*) who represents the combination of twenty-four elements is born out of action prompted by likes and dislikes originated from ignorance". [35]

Consciousness of Atman:

Throughout the compendium of *Charaka Samhita*, supreme soul (*Atman*) has been referred as *Chetana Dhatu* (Ch.Su.11/13, 25/9; Ch.Sh.1/16, 2/32, 4/8) *Chaitanya* (Ch.Su.30/7), *Chetana* (Ch.Su.1/47), *Chetanavan* (Ch.Sh.1/76, 4/8), *Jna* (Ch.Sh.1/54,83,97,153; Ch.Sh.3/33,4/8,5/10), *Drashta* (Ch.Su.1/56; Ch.Sh.3/33, 4/8), *Sakshi* (Ch.Su.1/56; Ch.Sh.1/5,83), *Kshetrajna* (Ch.Su.1/65), *Manta*, *Vedita*, *Boddhaa* etc.

From all these adjectives the element of pure consciousness in supreme soul can be established. In the very first chapter of *Charaka Samhita*, *Atman* has been referred as '*Chaitanye Karanam*' i.e., the cause of consciousness of this body-mind complex. [36] Prior to regard *Atman* as the cause of consciousness, it itself should be accepted as a conscious element. Further while justifying the supreme soul as eternal witness (*Jna*) *Acharya Charaka* has explained the consciousness of *Atman* by saying: "it is only he knows things can stand as a witness. So, all attributes, actions etc. of *Bhutas* are witnessed by the supreme soul who alone is knower of things. Things cannot be witnessed by unconscious objects like stone". [37]

Changelessness of Atman:

In *Charaka Samhita*, *Atman* has been considered as *Nirvikara* - the substance which never undergoes any positive (in form of happiness) or negative change (in form of misery). *Rashi Purusha* or *Samyoga Purusha* has been considered as seat of sensations. [38] *Acharya Charaka* has commented: "the absolute soul (*Paramatman*) does not undergo any modification. Its presence in different types of creatures does not bear any distinction. It appears to have distinctions only on account of the specific features of the body and mind of different types of creatures". [39] *Acharya Chakrapani* has commented on the aforesaid verse as: "this *Atman* is present in all creatures alike. Specific characteristics of the body and the mind are responsible for causing happiness and miseries in living beings and because of these specific features the *Atman* appears to have distinctions in different creatures. But this is not correct. Happiness etc. are not related to *Paramatman* (absolute soul); they are described here to be only the attributes of intellect". [40] *Acharya Charaka* has accepted the formlessness of absolute soul to be the principal cause of its changelessness attitude. *Atman* has been considered as formless because of its absolute minuteness. [41] As it is formless, it is never subjected to perform any action - so it never undergoes any change as a result of its action. As we have discussed earlier, throughout the compendium of *Charaka Samhita*, *Atman* (absolute soul) has been considered as devoid of creation (*Anadi*, *Nitya*), annihilation (*Anidhana*, *Amara*), ageing (*Ajara*), decay (*Akshaya*), misery (*Aruja*) and all form of changes (*Avyaya*).

Thus, it is quite evident that, *Acharya Charaka* has accepted absolute soul as a changeless entity.

Causality of Atman:

Acharya Charaka has referred *Atman* as *Hetu* (concomitant cause), *Karana* (non-constituent cause), *Nimitta* (efficient cause), *Karta* (the agent), *Dhata* (the supporter), *Brahma* (the creator), *Vishwakarma* (the builder of the universe) and *Prabhava* (the source of origin) along with many other adjectives.[42] In *Sharirasthana*, regarding the process of creation of this body it has been said that, "*Atman* (the soul), desirous of creating another body, first of all, unites with the *Akasha* and then with other four *Bhutas* (cosmic elements) whose attributes are more and more manifested successively".[43] The same view has been expressed in *Sutrashtana* also regarding the creation of living beings where it has been accepted that the *Atman* is the sole creator of this body: "*Atman*, the sustainer of consciousness is without any beginning. So, being eternal, it cannot be created by anything else. If creation by something else refers to the creation of the body by the absolute *Atman*, this would be an acceptable view".[44]

Along with the above view, *Acharya Charaka* has also accepted *Atman* as the non-constituent cause of this whole creation. To support this view he said: "if the *Purusha* were not there, knowledge, ignorance, truth or falsehood, the *Vedas*, good or bad action, the agent of action and the agent of knowledge could not exist. There would be no support, happiness, misery, movement, immobility, speech, knowledge, scriptures, birth, death, bondage or salvation. So, *Purusha* is recognised as the cause of this creation by those well versed in the theory of causality. If *Purusha* is not recognised as cause, the above would be left without a cause".[45] He further explains this causality of *Purusha* or *Atman* by giving examples like: "can a pitcher be constructed in-spite of presence of the earth, rod, wheel etc. if there is no potter? Can a house be constructed in-spite of the earth, straw, beams etc., if there is no mason? If not, how can the body be created just by virtue of the combination of different sense organs without a conscious agent?".[46] After declaring *Atman* as the non-constituent cause of creation, *Acharya Charaka* later accepts that this role of *Atman* as the supreme doer has been projected upon it.

In reality, *Atman* as the absolute soul is neither a doer (*Karta*) nor a recipient of any action (*Bhokta*) because it is actually a non-changing eternal reality devoid of any action or transformation. *Atman* in association with *Mana* (mind) acts a doer of this entire process of creation as mentioned in *Sharirasthana*: "*Mana* (mind) is active but devoid of consciousness. Thus, the all-pervasive *Atman* (soul) while in combination with the mind appears to have actions. As soul has consciousness, it is said to be the agent of action. The mind being devoid of consciousness is said to be devoid of action even though it is possessed of actions".[47] He also mentions that, "the instrument of knowledge are *Mana* (mind), *Buddhi* (intellect) and *Buddhi Karma Indriya* (cognitive and conative organs). Their association with the doer (*Atman*) results in action, sensation and understanding. The empirical soul alone in absence of instruments of knowledge does neither initiate action nor enjoy the fruit of action. Combination of all these factors is responsible for the manifestation of everything without that nothing exists".[48]

All pervasive nature of Atman:

Acharya Charaka has accepted the all-pervasive nature of *Atman* by referring the absolute soul as *Vibhu*, *Sarvaga* and *Sarvagata* (Ch.Sh.1/5,61,75,79,80; Ch.Sh.2/32). Even though Soul is all pervasive, He has sensation in respect of his own body depending upon the contacts of the sense organs with their respective objects. Being limited by contacts of the bodily sense organs with their objects, the soul cannot have all sensation. As because soul is all pervasive, the omnipresence of it is also established.[49] *Atman* has been referred as *Vishwarupa* in many places of *Charaka Samhita* (Ch.Sh.2/32, 3/14, 4/8). By referring *Atman* as *Vishwarupa*, *Acharya Charaka* has accepted *Atman* as the prototype of the universe. This view reflects the *Vedantic* view as described in various *Upanishads*.

Atman as Kshetrajna i.e., knower of the corpus:

In *Charaka Samhita*, the topic of *Kshetra* and *Kshetrajna* has been discussed in relation with *Atman*. The *Pancha Tanmatra*, *Buddhi*, *Avyakta* and *Ahamkara* are the eight source of creation (*Bhuta Prakriti*). Transformation (*Vikara*) are sixteen in number viz. *Karmendriya*, *Jnanendriya*, *Mana* and *Pancha Mahabhuta*.

All these taken together except *Avyakta* is known as *Kshetra* i.e., corpus. The *Avyakta* is known as *Kshetrajna* i.e., knower of the corpus. *Acharya Charaka* has accepted both *Prakriti* and *Purusha* together as *Avyakta*. *Acharya Chakrapani* has commented that: "here *Purusha* is included under *Prakriti* (*Avyakta*) because the quality of un-manifestedness is common to both *Purusha* and *Prakriti*".[50] Apart from these, in other place the term *Kshetrajna* has been mentioned as one of the synonym of *Atman*. [51] Also, *Atman* has been mentioned as *Avyakta* (un-manifested) as well as *Kshetrajna*. [52] Although question has been raised about which precedes first - *Kshetra* i.e., creation or *Kshetrajna* i.e., knower of creation?. [53] The answer has been given in following manner: "*Kshetrajna* or *Atman* is *Anadi* i.e., beginning less and so is *Kshetra* i.e., process of evolution of various elements. Thus, it is not possible to determine as to which one precedes other". [53]

Doctrine of Atman in Srimad Bhagavad Gita:

Srimad Bhagavad Gita being one of the central text of *Vedanta* philosophy and spiritualism in Indian tradition deals with the topic of *Atman* with great importance. The literary meaning of *Bhagavad Gita* is 'the song divine'. The scene of the delivery of the *Bhagavad Gita* by *Sri Krishna* to *Arjuna* is laid on the battlefield of *Kurushetra* where the *Pandavas* and the *Kauravas* had assembled their armies for war. The battle is described in all its details in the great epic *Mahabharata* and *Bhagavad Gita* forms the chapters 23 - 40 of the *Bhishma Parva* of the same epic. Throughout the eighteen chapters of *Bhagavad Gita*, mentioning about the doctrine of *Atman* comes again and again, sometimes it is called *Atman*, in other occasions it has been referred as *Dehi* (2/22), *Sat* (2/16), *Avyaya* (2/17), *Para Prakriti* (7/5), *Kshetrajna* (13/1-2), *Purusha* (13/19) and *Akshara* (15/16). But it is the second chapter namely '*Samkhya Yoga*' (means 'the path of knowledge') where this entire doctrine of *Atman* has been discussed elaborately by *Sri Krishna*. Also, in the thirteenth chapter namely '*Kshetra Kshetrajna Yoga*' (means 'the field and the knower of the field') the relation and discrimination between nature and absolute soul has been described vividly. Thus, these two chapters together form the foundation of studies on doctrine of *Atman* in *Bhagavad Gita*. Our discussion about the doctrine of *Atman* from the perspective of *Bhagavad Gita* is mainly based on these two chapters.

Introduction of doctrine of Atman in Bhagavad Gita:

In the colophon section of each chapter of *Bhagavad Gita*, this text has been mentioned as '*Brahma Vidya*' and '*Yoga Sastra*' indicating the central character of this compendium as the foremost text of fundamental studies on absolute soul as well as the practical manual dealing with the various paths of attaining the oneness with absolute soul by empirical soul. As per the descriptions, when *Arjuna* seeing his near and dear ones including his cousin brothers and preceptors among those against whom he had to fight, he became filled with pity with his eyes became filled with tears and showed distress and he started sorrowing, *Sri Krishna* begun counselling *Arjuna* about his real nature along with actual duty. [55] During the counselling *Sri Krishna* tried his best through various arguments with *Arjuna* to face the battle. As a *Kshatriya* (warrior class) *Arjuna* should face the battle as everybody within *Pandavas* depends upon him for winning of the battle. So, *Sri Krishna* wants *Arjuna* to recognize his duty at this crucial time of war through various arguments, some of them highly metaphysical and some of them very worldly. The metaphysical arguments placed by *Sri Krishna* before *Arjuna* about the real nature of self are based upon the philosophy of ascetic thought, known as '*Jnan Marga*' which denies the world, which believes in a transcendental experience, where the *Atman* is ever free without any attachments. That is every one's true nature. Birthless, deathless is the self of all. So, the metaphysics of *Sri Krishna*'s argument with *Arjuna* is based on the concept of *Atman*. Based on this metaphysical argument about everyone's real nature i.e. *Atman*, *Sri Krishna* induced *Arjuna* to face up the battle. [56] This is how the concept of *Atman* and its various attributes have been introduced and thoroughly discussed in *Bhagavad Gita*.

Atman as the only real nature of self:

At the beginning of the counselling with *Arjuna*, *Sri Krishna* describes human's real nature as *Atman* which is immortal, not subjected to birth and death. The physical body undergoes changes but the *Atman* remains as changeless entity and that is our real nature. In the eleventh verse of second chapter, *Sri Krishna* scolded *Arjuna* by saying 'you grieved for those who are not to be grieved for; and you speak words of wisdom.

The person who knows the real nature of self, doesn't grieve for the departed and those who have not departed".[57] In this verse *Sri Krishna* points out to the real nature of self as the eternal soul which is not subjected to birth and death as *Shankaracharya* points in his commentary as: "the idea is, 'you are sorrowing for those who are eternal in the real sense and who are not to be grieved for". [58] *Vedanta* philosophy traces the root cause of human's misery to ignorance about our real nature. Not knowing this, humans make mistake by identifying them as the body-mind complex. As *Shankaracharya* points in his commentary that, "sorrow and delusion are caused by the ideas of affection or parting etc., originating from the erroneous belief, 'I belong to these; they belong to me'..."[59] A true knowledge about the real nature about our self as the immortal changeless reality removes such delusions about body and mind. As another commentator *Madhusudana Saraswati* points out: "when the erroneous perception of a snake on a rope is removed as a result of the knowledge of the reality that is the rope, knowledge about our real nature (i.e., *Atman*) removes the possibility of fear, trembling etc.".[60]

Atman as the eternal, immortal and changeless reality:

In the twelfth verse of second chapter, *Sri Krishna* again points out to the *Atman* as the only eternal reality of ourselves beyond the mortal physical body by saying: "but certainly it is not a fact that I didn't exist at any time; nor you, nor these rulers of men. And surely it is not that we shall cease to exist after this".[61] *Shankaracharya* clarifies the meaning of this verse in his commentary as: "the meaning is that even in all the three times (past, present and future) we are eternal in our nature as the Self. The plural number (in we) is used following the diversity of the bodies, but not in the sense of the multiplicity of the self".[62] So, it can be said that, in this present verse *Sri Krishna* has revealed the real nature of *Atman* by pointing towards the fact that *Atman* is immortal, eternal and an unchanging reality. It never born with the birth of the body, not age with the ageing of the body nor it dies with the death of the body. In the subsequent verse, *Sri Krishna* points towards the changelessness of *Atman* as: "as are boyhood, youth and decrepitude to an embodied being in this present body, similar is the acquisition of another body. This being so, an intelligent person does not get deluded".[63]

The transliteration of this verse has been made by *Shankaracharya* as: "as to that to show how the *Atman* is changeless, the Lord (*Sri Krishna*) sites an illustration by saying, '....these three stages (boyhood, middle age and senility) are mutually distinct. Of these, when the first stage gets destroyed, the *Atman* does not get destroyed; when the second stage comes in to being *Atman* doesn't born. What then? It is seen that the *Atman* which verily remains unchanged acquires the second and third states. Similar indeed is *Atman*'s acquisition of another body - a body different from the present one".[64]

Atman as the only independent reality:

In the sixteenth verse of second chapter *Sri Krishna* describes *Atman* as the only reality, devoid of dependence and the whole world as appearance in this very *Atman*; hence treated as false. This verse forms the foundation of non-dual *Vedanta* philosophy. The verse goes like this: "Of the unreal there is no being; the real has no non-existence. But the nature of the both these, indeed, has been realised by the seers of truth".[65] To explain this highly metaphysical verse, the authors would like to quote the opinion of one of the most profound *Vedantic* scholar of modern times, *Swami Ranganathananda* on this: "in this verse the words *Sat* and *Asat* are used. In *Sankhya* terminology one is called the cause and the other is called the effect. The *Sat* is the effect, the *Asat* is the cause, because *Sat* you can see. And these cause and effect are non-different according to *Sankhya* philosophy. But in this present context, from *Vedantic* point of view, the word *Sat* means the real and *Asat* means the unreal. The *Sat* is the real - it can never be the non-existent. Our thinkers, when they studied the world, found two aspect to the world: one is changeable aspect, another an unchangeable aspect. Everything in this world is changeable, every second it is changing. And anything that changes, moment to moment, *Vedanta* calls it unreal. That is how we use the word unreal; it exists, but it is unreal. It appears, but it is unreal. *Vedanta* says there is the changeless reality beyond the sensory level, which is unchanging, infinite, and eternal. So, we use the word *Sat* for that infinite, imperishable reality - which is *Atman* and *Asat* for this perishable universe".[66] Another great scholar of modern time *Swami Ramsukhdas Ji* mentioned: "only the *Atman* as pure consciousness should be treated as *Sat* (unchanging reality) and except this *Atman*,

All the other element like *Prakriti* (physical world and its objects) should be treated as *Asat* (ever changing falsity). In the 14th and 15th verse of second chapter *Sri Krishna* points towards the perishable aspect of physical body - the same point of view has been here expressed as '*Naasato Vidyate Bhavah*' and in 12th and 13th verse of the same chapter *Sri Krishna* talks about the eternity of *Atman* - which has been here expressed as '*Naabhavo Vidyate Satah*'. [67]

Atman as all pervasive immutable reality:

In the seventeenth verse of second chapter, *Sri Krishna* describes *Atman* as the all-pervasive immutable reality which can't be destructed as: "But know that to be indestructible by which all this is pervaded. None can bring about the destruction of this immutable". [68] This infinite truth of the nature of pure, non-dual, consciousness, pervades the whole universe. Things are created and destroyed but that out of which all the universe comes cannot be destroyed at all. *Sri Krishna* mentions that, none has the power to destroy that indestructible reality behind this universe and one should know that reality as indestructible; that is also in this body as the self, the *Atman*; what is there (in universe) is also here (within this body). [69] The phrase in the present verse '*Yena Sarvamidam Tatam*' comes three times in Bhagavad Gita; first time in this present verse indicating the all-pervasive nature of *Atman* from the perspective of *Samkhya Yoga* (path of knowledge), second time in 22nd verse of eighth chapter indicating the all-pervasive nature of God from the perspective of *Bhakti Yoga* (path of devotion) and third time in 46th verse of eighteenth chapter indicating the all-pervasive nature of Almighty from the perspective of *Bhakti Yoga & Karma Yoga* (path of devotion & action). In the 4th verse of ninth chapter, *Sri Krishna* uses the term '*Maya Tatamidam Sarvam*' indicating the truth that all this universe is pervaded by himself. Thus, in the first three occasions *Sri Krishna* describes this metaphysics of all pervasiveness of self and God indirectly and in the fourth occasion directly. [70] Explaining how *Atman* cannot be destructed *Shankaracharya* wrote in his commentary as: "the immutable reality that which does not undergo growth and depletion. By its very nature this *Brahman* or *Atman* called reality does not suffer mutation, because unlike bodies etc., it has no limbs, nor does it suffer mutation by loss of something belonging to it,

Because this *Atman* has nothing that is its own". [71] Explaining the immutable reality of *Atman*, prominent spiritual personality Swami Vasudevananda beautifully wrote: "Basically destruction is of two types: 1. when a compound object becomes dismantled in to its structural units; and 2. when a basic element under goes change in its physical property. But *Atman* or *Brahman* being *Niravayava* (formless) and *Nirguna* (attribute less) can never undergoes any change in these parameters; hence can never be destructed". [72]

Atman as everlasting, indestructible, indeterminable reality:

Further *Sri Krishna* has described *Atman* as everlasting, indestructible, indeterminable reality to whom this mortal physical body belongs. He said in the 18th verse of second chapter that: "These destructible bodies are said to belong to the everlasting, indestructible, indeterminable, embodied one". [73] In this verse several adjectives have been used to denote *Atman* like *Nitya* (everlasting), *Anashina* (indestructible), *Aprameya* (indeterminable) and *Sharirina* (embodied one). *Shankaracharya* explains these adjectives as: "the two words *Nitya* and *Anashina* are not repetitive, because in common usage everlastingness and destructibility are of two kinds. As for instance, a body which is reduced to ashes and has disappeared is said to have been destroyed. And even while existing when it becomes transfigured by being afflicted with diseases etc. it is said to be destroyed. That being so, by the two words 'everlasting' and 'indestructible' it is meant that *Atman* is not subjected to both kind of destruction. The term *Aprameyasya* (indeterminable) means 'of that which cannot be determined by such means of knowledge as direct perception etc.' [74] Swami Ranganathananda clarifies this as: "which cannot be measured, which cannot be brought within the purview of speech and thought. That is called *Aprameya*. Everything in the world can be brought within the limit of thought and speech, not the *Atman*, because it is eternally the subject, is eternally of the nature of pure consciousness". [75]

Atman as non-doer of actions and non-receiver of results of action:

After declaring *Atman* as the changeless, indestructible entity which is not an object of knowing, *Sri Krishna* further clarifies the unique aspect of this absolute soul as:

"He who thinks of this one (*Atman*) as the killer and he who thinks of this one (*Atman*) as the killed - both of them do not know. This one (*Atman*) does not kill nor is it killed".[76] By this statement *Sri Krishna* declares that *Atman* is beyond the law of causality. *Atman* is neither the doer nor the experiencer of results of actions. *Shankaracharya* clarifies like this: "owing to its changelessness, it does not become the agent of the act of killing nor is it killed, that is, it does not become the object of the act of killing".[77]

Eternity of *Atman*:

Sri Krishna explains the eternity of *Atman* by saying: "This *Atman* is never born nor does it ever die; it is not something that having been born, it again ceases to be. This *Atman* is *Ajah* (birth-less), *Nitya* (eternal), *Swaswatah* (everlasting), *Purana* (ancient but ever fresh); it is not killed when the body is killed".[78] This is one of the most prominent verse of *Bhagavad Gita* referring the eternal, immortal character of *Atman*. *Shankaracharya* explains this verse beautifully in his commentary like this: "This (*Atman*) is not born; no such change of condition as birth takes place in the self (*Atman*). Nor does it (*Atman*) dies; this denies the last change of condition called death - 'ever' should be constructed with the denial of every change, thus: *Atman* is never born, never dies and so on. For the *Atman* having once existed does not afterwards cease to be any more. In ordinary parlance he is said to die who, having once existed, afterwards ceases to be. Neither does the *Atman* come into existence like the body, having not existed before. Wherefore *Atman* is unborn. For he is said to be born who having not existed before come into existence. Not so is the *Atman*. Wherefore *Atman* is unborn. And because *Atman* does not die, *Atman* is eternal. Though by the denial of the first and the last changes, all changes have been denied, yet it is thought to necessary to directly deny the intermediate changes, in the word 'everlasting' etc. *Atman* is *Swaswatah* (everlasting / undecaying) - not subject to the changes of condition known as *Apakshaya* (decaying). Having no parts, it does not diminish in its own substance. As devoid of qualities, it does not diminish by loss of quality. *Atman* is primeval, not subject to the change known as *Vridhhi* (growth) as opposed to decline. For that which increase in size by the accretion of parts is said to grow and to be renewed.

As devoid of parts, *Atman* was afresh in the past; as it is now or will be in future. *Atman* is not killed when the body is killed; it is not transformed when the body gets transformed".[79] To establish the eternity of *Atman* in this verse, *Sri Krishna* has basically denied '*Shada Bhava Vikara*' (six material changes of condition to which all the beings in the world are subjected) in *Atman*. These are : *Jayate* (birth), *Mriyate* (death), *Asti* (existence), *Vardhate* (growth), *Viparinamati* (transformation), *Apakshiyate* (decline) and *Vinashyati* (destruction). [80]

Atman as *Kshetrajna* - the knower of the field:

In the thirteenth chapter, *Sri Krishna* revealed to *Arjuna* that: "O son of *Kunti*, this body is referred as the 'field'. Those who are versed in this call him who is conscious of it as the 'knower of the field'".[81] Then he added, "understand me to be the 'knower of the field' in all the fields. In my opinion, that is knowledge which is the knowledge of the field and the knower of the field".[82] *Swami Ramsukhdas Ji* explained this verse as: "this verse indicates the oneness of self with eternal, omnipresent *Paramatman*. Thus, it means self is one with *Paramatman* which is considered to be the knower of the field".[83]

Atman - the wondrous truth:

All the discussion regarding *Atman* in *Bhagavad Gita* indicates towards the amazing facets of it - establishing *Atman* as a standalone truth which is beyond the limit of time, space and causation. The whole idea of *Atman* creates an immutable sense of wonder in every one's mind. This sense of wonder regarding *Atman* has been beautifully expressed by *Sri Krishna* in the 29th verse of second chapter as: "One sees it (*Atman*) as wonder; and so also another speaks of it as a wonder; and as a wonder another hears of it; and someone else indeed does not realize it even after hearing about it".[84] This verse bears the impression of another verse quoted by *Yama* as mentioned in *Katha Upanishad*,[85] which indicates that wherever this topic has been discussed it creates a huge sense of wonder. *Shankaracharya* wrote in his commentary: "one sees the *Atman* as a wonder, as a thing unseen, as something strange, as seen all on a sudden. And so, another speaks of it as a wonder; and another hears of it as a wonder. Though seeing it, hearing and speaking of it, none realise it at all".[86]

Madhusudana Saraswati in his commentary of this verse, discussed about nine paradoxical aspects of *Atman* which makes it a wondrous truth, which are worth of mentioning: 1. it appears as non-existent though existent, 2. as insentient though essentially self-effulgent consciousness, 3. as sorrowful though a mass of bliss, 4. as mutable though immutable, 5. As non-eternal though eternal, 6. as un-manifest though manifest, 7. as different from Brahman though non-different from it, 8. as bound though free, and 9. as possessed duality though non-dual. [87]

Common characteristics of *Atman* between *Charaka Samhita* and *Bhagavad Gita*:

Characteristics	Charaka Samhita	Bhagavad Gita
Atman is un-manifested	Sh. 1/61-62, 3/8	2/25
Atman is eternal, everlasting	Sh. 1/61-62, 1/59	2/11, 2/12, 2/18, 2/20, 2/21
Atman is indestructible	Sh. 1/61-62	2/18, 2/19, 2/20, 2/21
Atman is inaccessible by any signs / indeterminable	Sh. 1/84, 1/60	2/18
Atman is devoid of changes	Sh. 3/8, 4/33	2/13, 2/25
Atman is not governed by law of causality	Sh. 1/78	2/19
Atman is devoid of any activity	Sh. 1/5	2/19
Atman has independent existence	Sh. 1/5	2/16
Atman is absolutely free	Sh. 1/5	2/16
Atman is all pervasive	Sh. 1/5	2/17
Atman is beginning less	Sh. 1/53, 1/59	2/20
Atman is embodied	Sh. 1/	2/18
Atman is devoid of misery	Sh. 3/8	2/25
Atman is devoid of senility	Sh. 3/8	2/20
Atman is devoid of decay	Sh. 3/8	2/20, 2/21
Atman cannot be penetrated	Sh. 3/8	2/23
Atman cannot be cut down	Sh. 3/8	2/23
Atman is beginning less	Sh. 3/8	2/20, 2/21
Atman is endless	Sh. 3/8	2/20
Atman is immutable	Sh. 4/8	2/17
Atman is knower of the field	Sh. 1/61-62	13/1-2

Conclusion

It has been generally believed by many scholars that the philosophical basis of *Charaka Samhita* has been greatly influenced by *Samkhya* and *Vaisheshika* philosophy as well as Buddhism.

But where Buddhism denies the very existence of *Atman*, *Samkhya* accepts *Prakriti* and *Purusha* as separate identity. None of these concepts were accepted by *Charaka Samhita*. From the above discussion it is evident that, the doctrine of *Atman* as discussed in *Charaka Samhita* is by far large inspired by the principles of *Vedanta* philosophy. *Bhagavad Gita* being one of the central text of *Vedanta philosophy*, has discussed this doctrine of *Atman* with great importance - which forms the ontological basis of *Vedanta* philosophy. *Charaka Samhita* also followed the same ontological view in relation with the concept of *Atman*. Thus, such comparative study will help us to understand the influence of *Vedanta* philosophy on *Charaka Samhita* as well as to establish a separate ontological view of *Ayurveda*, comprising concepts of multiple philosophical school as adopted in *Ayurveda*, which will be able to address various metaphysical questions like nature of existence, concept of time - space - causation, laws of nature etc. from *Ayurveda's* own point of view.

Acknowledgement

The authors are immensely grateful to the various scholars of *Ayurveda*, especially Acharya Satyanarayan Srivastava as well as revered monks of Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Advaita Ashrama of Kolkata & Vedanta Society, New York (branch centre of Ramakrishna Math & Mission); especially to revered *Swami Atmapriyananda Ji*, *Swami Sarvapriyananda Ji* and *Swami Suddhidananda Ji* for their online and offline classes on *Bhagavad Gita*. We bow down our heads to their lotus feet.

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