#### WHERE CLASSICAL WISDOM MEETS INTELLIGENT LEARNING

### ii. Definitions of śarīra, jñānendriya, karmendriya, mana, buddhi, citta, ahaṃkāra, ātmā

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## Śarīra (Body)

#### **Etymological Definition**

- The Sanskrit root "√śṛ" or "śarī" implies **"to decay, to disintegrate."** Consequently, **śarīra** means "that which undergoes **continuous change** or degeneration."
- From an Ayurvedic standpoint, "śarīra" is not merely a physical mass; it is the **seat** of **consciousness** (ātman), operating through **mind (mana)** and **senses (indriyas)**.

#### **Scriptural Context**

Charaka Samhitā (Śārīra Sthāna 6/4) says:

"tatra śarīram nāma cētanādhişthānabhūtam pañca-mahābhūtavikāra-samudāyātmakam..."

This highlights the body as a composite of the five great elements (pañca-mahābhūta), animated by consciousness.

#### **Ayurvedic Perspective**

- Structure: Formed by the combination of pañca-mahābhūtas, organized into dhātus (tissues), malas (wastes), and srotas (channels).
- Function: A means for the soul (ātman) to experience and act in the physical world.
- Dynamic Nature: Always subject to growth, maintenance, and decay under the influence of doṣas (Vāta, Pitta, Kapha).

### **Indrivas (Faculties)**

In Ayurveda and Indian philosophy, **indriyas** are the **tools** through which the mind interacts with the external world. They are divided into two categories: **jñānendriyas** (**sensory faculties**) and **karmendriyas** (**motor faculties**).

# Jñānendriya (Sensory Faculties)

#### **Definition**

• Jñānendriyas are instruments of perception, each dedicated to receiving a specific type of sensory input.

#### Five Jñānendriyas

- 1. Chakşu Indriya (Eyes) Visual perception (rūpa).
- 2. Śrotra Indriya (Ears) Auditory perception (śabda).
- 3. Ghrāṇa Indriya (Nose) Olfactory perception (gandha).
- 4. Rasana Indriya (Tongue) Gustatory perception (rasa).
- 5. **Sparśa Indriya (Skin)** Tactile perception (sparśa).

#### **Scriptural Note**

Caraka Saṃhitā (Sūtrasthāna) emphasizes that the connection of mind (mana) with the appropriate sense organ (indriya) and its object (viṣaya) is essential for complete cognition.

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## Karmendriya (Motor Faculties)

#### **Definition**

Karmendriyas are the organs of action, enabling an individual to respond and engage with the world.

#### Five Karmendriyas

- 1. Vāk (Speech organ) Expression through language.
- 2. **Pāṇi (Hands)** Grasping, holding, manipulation.
- 3. Pāda (Feet) Locomotion.
- 4. Pāyu (Anus) Excretion.
- 5. **Upastha (Genitals)** Reproduction and sexual functions.

#### **Philosophical Insight**

• These faculties ensure **interaction** with the environment. In Ayurveda, **coordination** between jñānendriya (input) and karmendriya (output) is orchestrated by **mind** and influenced by **doṣic** states.

### Mana (Mind)

### **Etymological and Functional Definition**

- Mana (mind) derives from the root "√man," meaning "to think or contemplate."
- Acts as the **internal coordinator** for perception (with sense organs) and action (with motor organs).

#### **Ayurvedic Description**

**Caraka Saṃhitā** (Sūtra Sthāna 8/4) indicates that cognition requires the **convergence** of ātman, mana, indriya, and arthas (objects of perception).

• The mind **selects**, **focuses**, and **interprets** incoming sensory data, then **directs** responses.

### **Attributes of Mind**

- 1. Anu (subtlety): The mind is intangible and subtle.
- 2. **Eka (singularity)**: Operates on **one** object at a time for a **clear** cognition process.
- 3. Sankalpa-Vikalpa: Engages in thinking, reasoning, doubt, and mental constructs.

## **Buddhi (Intellect)**

#### **Definition**

- Buddhi is the faculty of discrimination, reasoning, and determination. Often described as the "decisive cognitive function."
- Distinct from mana, which deals with thought flow, buddhi specializes in **analysis** and **judgment**—the final resolution.

#### Role in Ayurveda

- **Clinical Insight**: In diagnosing diseases, a practitioner uses **buddhi** to interpret signs/symptoms, deduce dosic imbalances, and formulate treatments.
- Ethical and Moral Dimension: Buddhi decides right vs. wrong actions, reflecting sāttvic, rājasic, or tāmasic influences.

### **Scriptural Reference**

Bhagavad Gītā (ch. 2) portrays buddhi as the steady and discriminative faculty, essential for wise decision-making

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and maintaining mental equilibrium.

## **Citta (Memory-Consciousness)**

#### **Definition**

- In many Sanskrit texts, citta can denote memory, stored impressions, or the broader mind-stuff that contains samskāras (subconscious imprints).
- Acts as the reservoir where past experiences are recorded and from which recollections arise.

#### **Ayurvedic Context**

- Citta is intricately linked with manas and buddhi, forming a triad of mental faculties:
  - Manas: Perceives and contemplates.
  - o Buddhi: Discriminates and decides.
  - Citta: Stores, recalls, and influences future cognition based on past impressions.

#### **Clinical Relevance**

- Disorders of memory (e.g., amnesia) or emotional trauma can be viewed as **imbalances** in citta's function.
- Ayurvedic therapies (like sattvavajaya, rasāyana for mental rejuvenation) aim to harmonize citta to promote mental well-being.

## Ahamkāra (Ego-Sense)

#### **Definition**

- Ahaṃkāra literally means "I-ness" or ego principle.
- Represents the sense of individuality—identifying the self as distinct from others and the external world.

#### **Philosophical Standpoint**

- In **Sāṅkhya philosophy**, ahaṃkāra emerges from **mahat (buddhi)**, giving rise to **indriyas** and further differentiated existence.
- Ayurveda, drawing from Sāṅkhya, views ahaṃkāra as a **necessary** but potentially **distorting** force if excessive. Imbalanced ahaṃkāra can lead to **over-attachment, arrogance**, or ignorance.

#### Role in Health and Disease

- Excessive self-identification (ahamkāra) may fuel **stress**, anxiety, or doṣic aggravations. E.g., a **Pitta**-type individual with high ahamkāra might experience anger or competitiveness.
- Ayurveda's holistic approach (including mind-body practices) aims to **reduce** unhealthy ego-driven behaviors, fostering balance.

# Ātmā (Soul/Self)

## **Etymological and Metaphysical Basis**

- Ātmā denotes the innermost essence, the conscious self that is eternal and beyond physical constraints.
- In Vedānta, ātmā is the **unchanging** witness, while the **body-mind** complex is subject to birth-death cycles.

#### **Ayurvedic Explanation**

Caraka Saṃhitā (Śārīra Sthāna 1/46) underscores:

"Since the soul (ātman) is conscious, it is described as the doer (kartā)."

• Ātmā is the **core** that animates śarīra, employing mana, buddhi, ahaṃkāra, and indriyas to **experience** the world.

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### **Clinical Implications**

- Ayurveda considers true health as aligning with one's ātman, manifesting a balance of doşas, a calm mind, and ethical behavior.
- Spiritual practices (meditation, yoga, ethical living) are advised for deeper ātman-centric well-being.

## Interrelationship and Holistic View

- 1. Sarīra is the physical instrument;
- 2. Jñānendriyas and karmendriyas form the channels for receiving and acting upon external stimuli;
- 3. Mana processes and coordinates thought, while
- 4. Buddhi finalizes decisions;
- 5. Citta stores impressions and memories;
- 6. Ahamkāra gives the sense of individual identity;
- 7. Ātmā is the supreme consciousness, or the true self, witnessing the entire interplay.

**In Ayurveda**, optimal health arises when these faculties and principles function **harmoniously** under balanced dosic conditions. Disturbances in any layer—be it mental, intellectual, or ego-based—can **manifest** as disease. Restoring **equilibrium** hence requires addressing **all** dimensions (physical, mental, spiritual).

### Conclusion

These definitions—śarīra, jñānendriya, karmendriya, mana, buddhi, citta, ahaṃkāra, and ātmā—offer a deeply integrated lens into how Ayurveda interprets human existence. Rather than compartmentalizing the body and psyche, Ayurveda merges them in a systemic and spiritual continuum:

- The **body** is seen as the tangible realm of **ātmā's** expression.
- The mind (mana) orchestrates sensory and motor faculties, aided by intellect (buddhi) and ego (ahamkāra).
- The **citta** holds past experiences, shaping future cognition and behavior.
- Ultimately, ātmā stands as the silent witness, the core presence that drives life's purpose.

In clinical and philosophical practice, acknowledging each of these aspects fosters a **truly holistic** therapeutic approach—one that addresses the **roots** of imbalance and cultivates **comprehensive** well-being.

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