

Āyurvedic Concordance
The Doṣas & Their Guṇas

Verses listing 10 pairs or all of the guṇas by name: Ca. Su. XXV.36; Ca. Sā. VI.10; A. H. Su. I.18

Vāta Attributes

Caraka Su.I.59	Vāgbhaṭa AH Su. I.10	Suśruta Nī.I.3	Śārṅg. Ch. 5 25-35	Bhāva Prākāśa Ch.3. 104-105+
rukśa	rūkśa	cold	rajas guṇa	rajoguṇa
śīta	laghu	light	sūkśma	sūkśma
laghu	śīta	mobile	śīta	sīta
sukśma	khara	dry	rūkśa	rūkśa
cala	sūkśma	piercing	laghu	laghu
viśada	cala	follows transverse	cala	cala
khara		rajas		khara
gatiramūrtatvam ¹				mṛdu
anavasthitatvam ¹				yogavāhi

¹Caraka Su.XX.112, 13; Ca. Vi. VIII.98 rukśa, laghu, cala, bahuśīgra, śīta, puruṣa, viśada; Ca.Su.XII.4, 7 daruna, dry, light, cold, rough, clear

Pitta Attributes

Caraka Su.I.60	Vāgbhaṭa AH Su. I.11	Suśruta Su.XXI.11	Śārṅg. Ch. 5 25-35	Bhāva Prākāśa Ch.3. 120
sasneha	sasneha	tīkṣṇam	uṣṇa	uṣṇa
uṣṇa	tīkṣṇa	dravam	drava	drava
tīkṣṇa	uṣṇa	puti (fetid)	pīta	pīta
drava	laghu	nīlam	nīla	nīla
amla	visra	pītam	kaṭu & tikta tastes	sattva guṇa
sara	sara	uṣṇam	possesses sattva guṇa	sara
katu	drava	katu		kaṭu
gandha (fishy smell) visno ²		amla (when abnormally burnt)		laghu
varṇas ca śuklāruṇavarjo ²				snigdha

²Caraka Su.XX.14; Ca. Vi. VIII.97 uṣṇa, tīkṣṇa, drava, visram, amla, katuka

Attributes of Kapha

Caraka Su.I.61	Vāgbhaṭa AH Su. I.11	Suśruta Su.XXI.15	Śārṅg. Ch. 5 25-35	Bhāva Prākāśa Ch.3.124
guru	snigdha	śveta	snigdha	śveta
śīta	sīta	guru	guru	guru
mṛdu	guru	snigdha	śveta	snigdha
snigdha	manda	picchila	picchila	picchila
madhura	lakśṇa	śīta	śīta	śītala
sthira	mṛtsna	madhura	svadū	tamoguṇa
picchila	sthira	lavana (when burnt)	tamas guṇa	svādu
śukla (white color) ³				
madhura ³				
artsnyāni (softness) ³				

³Caraka Su.XX.1; Ca. Vi. VIII.96 snigdha, ślakṣṇa, mṛdu, madhura, sārāsa, sāndra, manda, sthimata, guru, śīta, vijjala, accha

Śarṅg. 1.5.23-24 Gives the three functions of doṣha:

Vāta, pitta, and kapha are called doṣhas (blemishes, vitiators), dhātus (supports, tissues), and malas (wastes) in different contexts: doṣas because they vitiate the body, dhātus because they support the body, and malas because they contaminate it.

According to Suśruta the attributes of blood are: red, oily/glossy, a little warm, similar to a sweet taste; it is heavy, has fleshy smell, and resembles in derangement pitta doṣa. Su. XXI.23-24

Śarṅg Section III. Ch. 12 3-4 Normal blood is madhura, red in color, neither cold nor hot, heavy, slightly unctuous, of unpleasant smell, and during vidāha (disordered state), produces symptoms like pitta. Visratā (slight unpleasant smell) dravatā (liquidity), rāga (redness), calana (movement), vilaya (pervasiveness in body)—these are the properties of each of the pañcabhūtas starting with pṛthvi resp. are present in rakta. See this section for its disturbed qualities.

Ca Su. XXIV.22 Blood should be regarded as pure when it has the color like that of gold and firefly, red lotus, lac juice, and guñja fruit.. See this section for its disturbed qualities.

Constitutional Expression of the Qualities

Vāta characteristics: Ca. Vi. VIII.98 Due to roughness the persons with predominance of vāta have rough, undeveloped and short body, constantly rough, weak, low, hoarse voice and sleeplessness; due to lightness light and unsteady movement, activities, diet and speech; due to mobility unstable joints, eye brows, jaw, lips, tongue, head, shoulder, hands and feet; due to abundance talkativeness and abundance of tendons and venous system; due to swiftness hasty initiations, quick irritation and disorder, quick in fear, attachment, and disenchantment, quick in acquisition but with a poor memory; due to coldness intolerance to cold, continuously inflicted with cold, shivering and stiffness; due to coarseness coarse hair, beard/mustache, small hairs, nails, teeth, face, hands and feet; due to clear cracked body parts and constant sound in joints during movement. Because of these qualities persons with predominance of vāta have mostly low degree of strength, life span, progeny, means and wealth.

Ca. Vi. VIII.97 Due to hotness the persons having predominance of pitta are intolerant of heat, have hot face, delicate and fair organs, moles, freckles, black moles, pimples, excessive appetite and thirst, early appearance of wrinkles, greying and hair loss, generally soft, sparse and brown beards/mustaches, thin hair and hairs; due to sharpness sharp prowess, intense fire, taking ample food and drink, lack of endurance, frequent eating; due to liquidity lax and soft joints and muscles, excess sweat, urine and feces; due to fleshy smell fetid smell in axilla, mouth, head and body; due to pungency and sourness little semen, sex and few progeny; from these qualities the person having predominance of pitta is moderate of strength, life-span, knowledge, understanding, wealth, and means.

Ca. Vi. VIII.96 Due to unctuousness the person with predominance of kapha has unctuous organs, due to smoothness smooth organs, due to softness pleasing, delicate and fair organs, due to sweetness abundant semen, sex, and progeny, due to nature of essence excellent, compact and stable body, due to solidity all organs well-developed and symmetrical, due to dullness dull in activities, diet and speech, due to rigidity delayed initiation, irritation and disorder, due to heaviness movements supported with essence and stability, due to coldness little hunger, thirst, pyrexia, and perspiration, due to sliminess will united and strong joint ligaments, due to clarity clear eyes and face with clear and unctuous complexion and affectionate voice. From these qualities the śleṣma person is strong, wealthy, learned, brave, calm and long-lived.

Normal Functions of VPK Ca Su XX locations of VPK normal and abnormal states

- According to Caraka—Su. XVIII.49-51
 1. Vāta governs enthusiasm, inspiration, expiration, movements, normal processing of dhātus, normal elimination of excreta

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2. Pitta governs vision, digestion, heat, hunger, thirst, softness in the body, luster, cheerfulness, intellect
3. Kapha governs unctuousness, binding, firmness, heaviness, potency, strength, forbearance, restraint, and absence of greed

The Functions of Vāyu Ca. Su. XII.8

Vayu, when undisturbed, holds up the systems and organs, has five forms—prāṇa, udāna, samāna, vyāna, apāna, initiates upward and downward movement, leads and controls the mind, employs all sense organs in their activity, carries all sense objects, causes structural formation of all bodily dhātus, promotes union in the body, prompts speech, originates touch and sound, is the root of auditory and tactile sense organs is source of exhilaration and courage, stimulates agni, absorbs doṣas; throws out excreta, makes the gross and subtle channels, shapes the fetus and maintains life span.

When it is vitiated in the body, it afflicts it with various disorders and thereby affects strength, complexion, happiness and life span. It agitates the mind, affects all the sense organs, destroys, deforms or detains the embryo, produces fear, grief, confusion, anxiety and excessive delirium and stops the vital breath.

The normal vāyu, moving about in the nature performs these functions—holding up the earth, kindling of fire, disposing continuous movements of the sun, the moon and groups of stars and planets, making of clouds, raining water, initiating streams, producing flowers and fruits, sprouting of plants, demarcation of seasons, division of dhātus, manifesting the measure and shape of dhātus, strengthening of seeds, growth of plants, removing excessive moisture, absorbing and normal transformation.

When it moves about in nature in the vitiated condition it shows these effects—churning of the tops of mountains, churning of trees, producing high tides in oceans, overflowing of the lakes, counter-current in rivers, earthquake, moving of clouds with sound, showering of dew, thunder, dust, sand, fish, frog, snake, alkali, blood, stone, and thunderstorm, derangement of 6 seasons, non-compactness of crops, complications in creatures, replacing the positive factors with negative ones and release of clouds, sun, fire, and wind which bring about the end of the four ages.

Vāyu is all powerful, producer and indestructible, causes negation of the positive factors in creatures and brings about happiness and misery. He is death, Yama, regulator, Prajāpati, Aditi, viśva, karmā (performing all functions), taking all sorts of forms, penetrates into all, executes all the systems, is subtle among the things, is pervasive, Viṣṇu (protector), moves in the entire nature, what else Vāyu himself is the Lord (all powerful).

Ca. Sā. VII.17 The causative agent in conjunction and disjunction of cells is vāyu and also the nature of activities.

Bhela Ci. XXIV.51-59 (Very similar discourse on external function as in Caraka)

Bhe. Su. XVI. (Discourse on internal functioning)

The Functions of Pitta Ca. Su. XII.11

Pitta in the body is responsible for producing wholesome and unwholesome effects such as (respectively)—	
digestion / indigestion	normal / abnormal complexion
vision / non-vision	exhilaration / anger
proper body heat	clarity / confusion

The Functions of Kapha Ca. Su. XII.12

Kapha, containing soma, is responsible for good or bad effects when balanced or vitiated such as, respectively:	
firmness / laxity	development / emaciation

enthusiasm / idleness,
potency / impotency

knowledge / ignorance
understanding / confusion

Vāg. AH Su. XI. 1-3 Normal functions of VPK

Vāta: protects the body

- bestowing enthusiasm (eagerness, desire)
- exhalation and inhalation
- all movements (of the body, mind, speech)
- initiation (and execution) of urges
- maintenance of tissues
- proper functioning of senses

Pitta in its normal state governs:

- digestion
- body temperature
- vision
- hunger
- thirst
- appetite
- complexion
- intelligence
- courage
- valor
- softness (suppleness) of the body

kapha in its normal state governs:

- stability
- lubrication
- compactness (firmness) of the joints
- forbearance (forgiveness, withhold emotions, strain, etc)

According to Vāgbhāṭa (Su. XI.34.5-36) the functions of abnormal doṣas in either increase (vṛddhi) or decrease (kṣaya) cause vitiation of rasa and other tissues. Both doṣa and dhātu together vitiate the wastes (malas), which in turn vitiate the malāyanās (channel of their elimination)—7 in the head, 2 below, and channels for sweat; from these vitiated channels develop the associated disease.

• Śārṅg. Ch. 5 25-35

1. Pitta is lame, kapha is lame, as are the tissue (wastes); these are driven by vāta from place to place as the clouds by the wind. Vāta is most powerful of the three by activating the others and making them work . It is active in the colon, small intestine, the abdominal cavity, heart, throat, and the entire body. Prāṇa, udāna, samāna, apāna, vyāna are its subtypes. Of the three doṣas, vāyu is the powerful one from its activating the others and putting them to work.
2. Pitta in the skin maintains luster of complexion and processes (cooks) pastes and oils applied to skin; pitta in the liver converts rasa into blood; pitta in the eyes governs vision; that in the heart governs intellect and consciousness; pācaka, bhrājaka, rañjaka, ālocaka, and sādḥaka are the subtypes respectively.
3. Kapha is located in the stomach, head, throat, heart, joints. It confers stability and strength. Its subtypes are kledana, snehana, rasana, avalambana, and śleṣmaka, respectively. Śārṅg. Ch. 5 25-35

Dhātus, their malas, and the doṣas destroy the body when they become abnormal but protect it with health strength and growth when they are normal. Sharn I. Ch 5.23-24

Vāta, pitta, and kapha, if deranged, affect all the above entities morbidly due to their nature of causing morbidity. The characters of vāta etc vitiated in different dhātus and stages have already been given in the chapter on various food and drink. The movement of the vitiated doṣas is limited to the impact on body constituents. The result of the doṣas in normal state is freedom from disorder. Hence the wise should attempt for their normalcy. Ca Sa VI.18

All innate diseases do not arise but for VPK. Ca. Su. XIX.9.5

Ca. Su. XVII.115-118 dosha (movement) is NORMAL = ojas and abnormal = disorder

Statement of importance of vāta: vāyu is life, strength, sustainer of creatures, vayu is the entire world, it is the master of all. The person whose vayu is unimpeded and in normal state lives long for hundreds of years without disease. Ca. Ci. XXVIII.3-4

Ca. Ci. XXVII.287 Despite differences – contrary nature of doṣas they do not destroy one another because of innat adjustment (poison in the snake does not kill it. _

Seats of the Doṣas

- According to Caraka Su. XX.8 urinary bladder, colon, waist, thighs, feet, bones, and especially the colon are the sites of vāta; sweat, plasma and lymph, lasika (sebaceous secretions), blood and stomach are pitta's sites with the stomach its main site; kapha resides in the chest, head, neck, joints, stomach, fat but especially the chest.
- Vāta, pitta, and kapha pervade the entire body and produce good or bad consequences in the entire body when balanced or vitiated. In the normal state they give good consequences like development, strength, complexion, cheerfulness, etc. and in vitiation they give bad results known as disorders (vikāra). Ca. Su. XX.9
- According to Vāgbhaṭa Aṣṭ. Hṛd Su. XII.1-3
Vāta: large intestine (pakvāśaya), thigh, ear, bone, and skin (organ of touch), especially the colon.
Pitta: umbilicus (nābhi), stomach (āmāśaya), sweat, lasika (lymph or sebaceous secretions according to others), blood, plasma (rasa), eyes, skin (organ of touch), especially around the umbilicus (here meaning the stomach and small intestines).
Kapha: chest, throat, head, kloma (pancreas, 3rd ventricle, soft palate), bony joints, stomach (āmāśaya), plasma (rasa), fat (medas), nose, tongue; especially the chest (ura here meaning more the stomach).
- According to Vāgbhaṭa Sangraha Ch 1. 22-23 Vāya, pitta, kapha are the three doṣas of the body; each one is of three kinds –increase, decrease, and normal; both increase and decrease are of three kinds: severe, moderate, and mild. Though present all over the body, they are predominantly found in the regions below, in between and above, respectively, of the area bound by the heart and umbilicus. They are predominant during the last, middle, and first periods of life, day, night, and food (digestion).
- According to Vāgbhaṭa Sangraha Ch. 20.1 vāyu is formed out of vāyu and ākāśa bhūtas; pitta from agni bhūta; kapha from ap and pṛthvi bhūtas.
- According to Vāgbhaṭa Sangraha Ch. 20.1- seats of vāta are: colon, waist, thighs, feet, bones, ears, and the skin—especially the colon; umbilicus, stomach (āmāśaya) (and SI), sweat, lymph, blood, eyes, and the skin are seats of pitta—especially the region of umbilicus; seats of kapha are chest, throat, head, kloma (pancreas?), joints, āmāśaya, rasa, fat, nose, tongue—especially the chest.
- **** According to Vāgbhaṭa Sangraha Ch. 20.1 Thus the body is supported by these three doṣas situated in the lower, middle, and upper portions, respectively, just like a house is supported firmly by three pillars. Since the doṣas maintain the firmness of the body they are called pillars, they are (also) called as dhātus because they support the body and as malas because they pollute the body and also because they are the wasted products of the food; they are called as doṣas because of their tendency of polluting others.
- According to Suśruta Su. XXI.4

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Vāta: located in the region of the shroni and guda (pelvis and rectum)

Pitta: region between āmāśaya and pakvāśaya (stomach and small intestines)

Kapha: within the cavity of the āmāśaya (stomach)

Blood: liver and spleen from whence it helps the other receptacles to serve their proper functions.

Sub-Types of the Doṣas

Ca Ci XXVIII.5-11 the vata subtypes (NOTE: Caraka does not describe the sub-types for pitta and kapha)

1. Prāṇa: located in the head, chest, throat, tongue, mouth, and nose; its functions are spitting, sneezing, belching, respiration, digestion, etc.
2. Udāna: located in the navel, chest, and throat; governs speech, effort, energy, strength, complexion, etc.
3. Samāna: located in channels carrying sweat, doṣas, and water and seated beside the digestive fire; provides strength to agni
4. Vyāna: being quick-moving it pervades the entire body; performs movements, extensions, contractions, blinking, etc.
5. Apāna: located in the testicles, urinary bladder, penis, navel, thighs, groin, anus; it releases semen, urine, feces, menses, and fetus

Vāgbhaṭa Aṣṭ. Hṛd Su. XII.4-9 Vāta Sub-types: Prāṇa is of 5 types

1. Prāṇa: located in head and moves in chest and throat; it supports mind, heart, sense organs, intelligence, expectoration, sneezing, belching, inspiration, and swallowing of food
 2. Udāna: located in the chest and moves in the nose, umbilicus, and throat; its functions are speech, effort, enthusiasm, strength, complexion, memory
 3. Vyāna: located in the heart it moves all over the body in great speed; it governs walking, bringing body parts downward, closing the eyes, and all activities, generally, of the body
 4. Samāna: located near the digestive agni, and moves in the koṣṭha (alimentary tract), aids digestion, separates essence from wastes, and eliminates (the wastes)
 5. Apāna: located in the large intestine (apānagaḥ), moves in the waist, bladder, penis and thighs; it governs functions of elimination of semen, menstrual fluid, feces, urine, and fetus
- According to Vāgbhaṭa Sangraha Ch. 20.2 Each doṣa is of five types; such as prāṇa, udāna, vyāna, samāna, apāna of vāta.
 1. prāṇa is located in the head, moves downwards in the region of the throat, nose, and umbilicus, attends to the functions of maintaining intellect, sense organs, heart, mind, and arteries (veins, too), functions such as expectoration, sneezing, belching, inspiration, expiration, swallowing of food, and so on.
 2. udāna is located in the chest, moves in the region of the throat, nose and umbilicus, attends to the functions of producing speech, activities (physical movements, actions), valor, strength, color, nourishing the tissue pores they provide them nutrition, discrimination, courage, memory, awakening of the mind, and such others.
 3. vyāna is located in the heart, moves all over the body with great speed, attends to the functions of (locomotion), expansion, contraction, upward movement, downward movement, opening and closing of the eyelids, yawning, feeling the tastes of food, clearing (or cleansing or widening) of the channels (or pores), causing the flow of sweat and blood, bringing the male reproductive tissue into the uterus, separating the nutrient portion and wasted portion of the food (after its digestion) and supplying nourishment to all the dhātus in proper order.
 4. samāna is located near the digestive fire (in the stomach) kindles it, moves inside the colon, stomach, and SI, channels of the doṣas, malās, śukra, ārtava, ambu, supports them in their functions, attends to functions such as retaining of food, digestion, separation of essence and wastes, and moving the waste products downwards and so on.
 5. apāna is located in the rectum, moves along the bladder, pelvis, penis, testes, and groin, attends to elimination of feces, urine, semen, menstrual fluid, and fetus, etc.
 - Suśruta Ni. I.4-12—prāṇa, udāna, samāna, vyāna, apāna
 - Bhāva Prakāśa Ch3.108—udana prana samana apana vyana is order given

- Vāgbhaṭa Aṣṭ. Hṛd Su. XII.10-14 **Pitta Sub-types**: Anala is of 5 types and functions as tejas, devoid of water and cold, to digest/transform (food)
 1. Pācaka: located in the colon and stomach (small intestines) it cooks food and divides it into essence and waste, works to help (ranjaka) located there and nourishes the other pittas by giving them strength
 2. Ranjaka: located in the stomach it imparts red color to rasa (to form blood)
 3. Sādhaka: located in the heart it governs mental functions—knowledge, intelligence, self-consciousness in the aims of life
 4. Ālocaka: located in the eyes it governs seeing of all forms
 5. bhrājaka: located in the skin it governs color/complexion
- Suśruta Su. XXI.9-13— pācakāgni, ranjakāgni, sādhakāgni, alocakāgni, bhrājakāgni
- Bhāva Prakāśa Ch3.121—pācaka, rañjaka, sādhaka, alocaka bhrājaka
- Vāgbhaṭa Aṣṭ. Hṛd Su. XII.15-18 Kapha Sub-types: Śleṣma is 5 types:
 1. Avalambaka: located in the chest and trik, and by its own force and that of the rasa present in the heart it supports by predominance of action of water element and bestows strength to all kapha sites
 2. Kledaka: located in the stomach it serves to moisten hard food masses.
 3. Bodhaka: located in the tongue it promotes taste perception
 4. Tarpaka: located in the head it nourishes sense perception
 5. Śleṣaka: located in the joints it lubricates the joints.
- Suśruta Su. XXI.17-21—(kledaka) the kapha, though mainly in the stomach permeates its 4 other distant sites and with its water and humid nature with its inherent qualities; (avalambaka) located in the region of the chest, it protects the joins of the arms, neck and sternum, and supports the heart to perform its natural functions with the help of the lymph derived from the assimilated food and its own native potency; (bodhaka) situated in the throat and at the root of the palate, lends its aid to the perception of tastes by maintaining the moist or humid character of the tongue; (tarpaka) this kapha situated in the head cools and bathes the different sense organs with own liquid essence in virtue of its natural liquid attributes; (śleṣaka) this kapha situated in the joints keeps them firmly united, protects their articulation and opposes their separation and disunion these are the sites of the deranged humors
- Śārṅg. Ch. 5 25-35—prāṇa, udāna, samāna, apāna, vyāna
- Bhāva Prakāśa Ch3.127—kledana, avalambana, rasana, snehana, śleṣaṇa
- Su. Su. XXI.2—According to this verse blood is the 4th doṣa. These 4 together determine the origin, preservation, and dissolution of the living organism and permeate it with their respective properties till moment of death.
- Śāṅgdhara Ch. 5.23-24--Vāta, pitta, kapha are called doṣas, dhātus, and malas as they vitiate the body, support it, and contaminate it, respectively. While normal they comprise the tissues and sustaining functions of the body, but when abnormal they get vitiated themselves or/and pollute/vitiate the tissues and wastes.
- Bhela Samhitā: Sā. IV.3-8. In an explanatory passage Bhela (PV Sharma) describes the functions of pitta sub-types as: perceptive, pigmentative, irradiative or shining, effective or accomplishing, and digestive:
 1. Perceptive—this faculty is by nature that ability developed and matured by the rains, the cold and the sunshine. This is of two kind visually / optically (cakṣus) differentiative and intellectually (buddhi) differentiative. It produces a differentiation by place a picture (before). What is intellectually unique is situated between the two brows in a (marma) śṛṅgāṭaka (aka adhipati by Suśruta). This grasps by its knowledge the very subtle meanings concerning facts about the spiritual and the matters about the soul; it show up what is knowable, what is knowledge, and all that is knowable meant for the understanding of the ultimate absolute. It therefore grasps the knowledge after knowing the knowledge and the knowable. It retains what is grasped. It illustrates well and repeats by what is retained. It recollects what is past. It reacts to what is imminent in the present and having done so, it also prays for (what it desires) in the

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future that has not yet come about. Even as it is just born, though it is not instructed to do so, it follows its own (instinctive) nature and desires for the milk in its mother's breasts. It produces a specialization in intellect at regards continued contemplation (on anything it desire) as well as taking itself away (from anything it desires).

2. Therein, (what is called by) name as irradiative or shining, is what makes known the body and (its) characteristics; exhibits or displays the prominence; it generates or produces an increase or an emphasis in the patternedness of the head, the hands, the soles of the foot, the sides, the back, the belly, the shanks of the person, the nails, the hairs. For the irradiative is called so since it is this that renders a shining.
3. The pigmentative: by the might of the sense organs (one) aspiring (for) supremacy or overlordship or by the egoism of the state of intellect,(the pigmentative / rājasa kāyāgni) assumes as if it (this coloration) is its own (henceforth) whatever meaning or significance it longs for intensely (taking it or deriving it) from the objects (it encounters). {The variations of the body's coloration, the shades and the intensities ensue from the overloading might of the respective sense organs. The variations of the mental coloration ensue from the variations in the states of the mind which is the (sixth) organ, the other (five) being what are already well-known. In either case the organism secures whatever it longs for, from the environment in which it is placed.} This means that the eye, the ear, and the nose; the tongue, the skin, the speech, the hand, the rectum, and the genitalia produce a pigmentation among themselves mutually, engaged as per their habit in reference to all kinds of sense objects. The pigmentative or the rājaka produces a coloration by entering in the interior; the middle and the inside of the place of pitta. That is why it is called rājaka or the pigmentative.
4. (What is called by the name) effective is that which secures every object of sense concerning the path towards upliftment and final liberation by its own stratagem. (This is equally so) as regards what is desired in the mundane and the sensual such as sound, touch, smell, or the spiritual such as (the grace) from the gods, the sages, the manes, etc.
5. What is called by the name as the Digestive is that which digests whatever that is gulped in, drunk, licked up, or eaten with the teeth namely the entirety of what is food and it does so with a virility that is in-born. (and this is that) which fulfills well its own desires as well as the)digestive) fire (that is needed) and (in addition) causes delight to itself.

Signs and Symptoms of Decreased vāta, pitta, kapha

AH Su. XI.15, 16 Signs of decrease of vāta: debility of the body, the person speaks very little and does very little activity, loss of sensation (awareness), and of consciousness and occurrence of all the symptoms of increased kapha.. Decrease of pitta produces weakness of digestive activity, coldness, and loss of complexion. Decrease of kapha causes dizziness, emptiness of the organs of kapha, tremors of the heart (palpitation) and looseness of the joints.

Śārṅgadhara Ch 2.19-21 describes the transformation--vipāka--as yielding sweet K, sour P, pungent V into the physiology. This means that sweet vipāka adds kapha to the physiology, amla adds pitta, and katu adds vāta to the physiology. Hence, in the digestive process the doṣas are produced and enter physiology. We will see in dhātu nutrition that they are produced in the process of tissue metabolism as a kind of waste product and nourish doṣic functioning again. Nutrition of the doṣic entity takes place as the routine production of malas for kapha in transformation of rasa and of pitta in process of rakta transformation. The values of Vāta are generated in the colon in the kaṣaya avastha paka and absorbed there. All these doṣic portions are poṣaka or circulating/immature and represent the material or structural value of the doṣas.

The science of life and longevity, known as Āyurveda, is an ancient system of health care indigenous to India. It is a body of knowledge which embraces numerous Indian philosophical systems and numerous sciences including: psychology, anatomy, physiology, botany, biology, physics, chemistry. These have been blended together into a master science greater than our own modern concept of medicine, but including it. Ancient texts describe how the psychic, physical, and metaphysical realms interact and affect one another. Mental events have physical outcomes and vice versa. In the modern science, quantum physics, matter and energy have been shown

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to be no longer separate fields of existence but mere expressions of a single field more subtle and profound--even intelligent, all powerful, infinite, eternal. This is the field of study for Āyurveda.

Āyurveda describes two ways of looking at the universe—structurally & functionally. Āyurveda says that it is comprised of 5 basic substances or 5 elements—space, air, fire, water, and earth. But since each of these elemental substances has attributes—such as dry, mobile, light, hot, cold, 10 pairs in all—we can also describe our experiences in functional terms. These attributes are actions—in some ways representing the stable nature of the substance (vehicle). Air is mobile and anything that moves must have some air element in it and conversely, for example. Either method of looking at reality will always imply the other.

One of the principles of this science is the term *doṣa*. It often is translated to mean impurity. But it means much more. *Doṣa* is a functional unit of physiology. It has three aspects which serve, collectively, to govern all of bodily functioning, indeed the functioning of the entire universe can be explained. These three aspects are called *vāta*, *pitta*, *kapha* and give expression to movement, transformations, and structure, respectively. Ancient writers in Āyurveda translated *doṣa* to mean--bodily humors--and described them as air, bile, phlegm, respectively. These terms were more descriptive of gross **forms** of the *doṣic* principles than of their **functions**. More attention was placed on finding their morbid expression than on finding proof of their normal functioning.

This brings us to the point that in Āyurveda function is paramount. Form follows function. Therefore, the concept of *doṣa* is primarily a concept of physiology rather than of anatomy. It is that concept which integrates the external universe with the internal. It is the causal link that brings understanding to why the external environment affects physiology, personality, and temperament, which in turn affects the environment through our thoughts, speech, and actions.

Specifically, *vāta doṣa* (space & air) is responsible for all motion and movement of the body and its systems and for catabolic processes. It governs speech, respiration, circulation, elimination, creativity, cheerfulness, and the nervous system. *Pitta* (fire & water) governs digestion, metabolism, and thinking / discrimination, vision, body temperature, complexion, courage, and enthusiasm. It governs thermogenesis and brings about transformations of all types e.g., energy into matter and vice versa or energy and matter into different forms of one another. *Kapha* (water and earth) is the principle of structure and anabolic processes. It governs fluid balance, secretions, thermotaxis, contentment, forgiveness, strength, binding, growth, potency, patience, heaviness, compassion, and understanding. These principles operate from conception and give rise to bodily form. Taken together they are the body in form and process. They nourish, pollute, and vitiate depending upon one's point of view. As they give rise to a body they nourish. When one or more is quantitatively in excess pollution of the body's tissues and organs may occur. And if the functioning is qualitatively disturbed it may disrupt its own or another's functions. This means that *doṣas*, alone can cause bodily health or disease. They are the causative forces. Controlling them is the aim of Āyurveda.

We would like to digress a moment on the methodology or science of this construct. The term *doṣa* is not a physical reality in the body in the sense that one can point a finger at it or touch it. The term is an organizing principle that helps us to organize certain experiences with the body and its functioning. It is a construct which forces us to categorize according to given rules such as things that move, or change, or grow. We do not have to prove the physical existence of the *doṣas* to understand or infer that they function. Evidence of their functioning is indeed the only proof needed. Thus the term is not a description of reality but a way of relating to our experiences in reality. This is the approach of science. We build models which help us orient in the territory but these models or maps are not the territory itself.

The *doṣas* are organizing principles, not only for understanding gross physiology but also on a very subtle level. Each *doṣa* represents two energy types called elements. The *doṣas* can be viewed as a kind of intelligence that maintains the operational integrity of its elements. For *vāta*, with space and air, the space is necessary for a field of expression—for a space-time dimension. Space gives the air element a playground to play in. Space is a

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container and the content is movement of air. Without dynamism expressed by the air principle the space-time continuum would be meaningless. Similarly, for pitta the water element serves as its container and the fire or heat within is its content. The balance of these gives the proper dimension to transformational activity—a balance of hot and cold. Dilute digestive juices are ineffective and too much fire consumes the container—the life itself. Finally, for kapha with water and earth there is also a symbiotic relationship. Water takes the shape of the container—the earthen bowl for example and even is a medium for the transport of nutritional molecules (the earth element). It is also true that the cell membrane is mostly lipid which can serve as a container for water and earth molecules within. Earth that is too wet is ill-suited for some life forms and conversely. Recall in the body that the earth molecules give water a kind of mobility by supporting the function of bones. Earth also serves as a protective structure as with the rib and skull bones. Too much earth reduces flexibility of muscles and not enough makes muscle and bones weak. Thus it is that the doṣa is the energy or intelligence which manifests--is objectified in dynamic and substantive ways.

The doṣas are said to govern any particular person or thing in a way which is unique to that entity. In the realm of living beings Āyurvedic practitioners, called vaidyas, attempt to classify each person according to the relative contribution each of the doṣas makes in an individual. This means that a vaidya determines which doṣic principle is most, lesser, and least lively in shaping a person and expressing according to its qualities and functions. This process gives rise to a ranking such as pitta, vāta, kapha where pitta is most important and kapha least important. There are seven variations of this theme in all (3 mono doṣic, 3 bi-doṣic, 1 tri-doṣic). Whatever one is born with is permanent for life. This typing of constitution yields insights into what a person is like at a fundamental level. It suggests strengths and even weaknesses. It helps us avoid or prevent disease by understanding what things, behaviors, etc. are most likely to be detrimental to us. It gives insight as to why different members of the same family can have entirely different tastes, behaviors, personalities, diseases and so on. This understanding leads us to appreciate these differences in humans as the result of fundamental forces in nature rather than as only chosen paths, preferences, and temperaments. Thus in the phrase *nature or nurture* both are important. Diversity is appreciated as a thing of beauty not to be derided. Doṣa makes us appreciate this.

This concept of constitution defines the state of balance which is normal to an individual. It gives the target that we try to restore when the body is out of balance. When the status of the doṣas in the present is the same as that given by birth then their functioning is said to be balanced.

The Āyurvedic conception of disease is given as the imbalanced functioning of the doṣas. Something as simple as a runny nose is defined as imbalance or disease. The doṣas bring about these changes according to influences they receive in the form of the food we eat, the kinds of things we see, hear, feel, smell, even what we feel and think and do. If we experience a good thing for long time it may become the force of disease if the doṣic principles can not maintain balance while experiencing it. The modern concept of disease as something you “catch” promotes a fear or antagonism toward the disease and toward Nature Itself. This concept of doṣa and imbalance suggests that the disease is not something alien attacking the body but our own body out of balance in confusion. We need not fear this process but rather begin to give it new instructions and experiences, which promote balance among the doṣas. This understanding gives rise to a completely different psychology of disease which is in itself beneficial to healing and health.

Perhaps most importantly, we arrive at a fundamental understanding of cause and effect with the application of the principle of doṣa. Doṣas get their instructions from genes at one level of understanding; i.e., they can be characterized as the agents of DN.A. They are a functional blueprint for life. They tend to interact in a harmonious and, at times, compensatory way to govern and sustain life. But at another level of understanding they also are the agents of every other experience—perceived or unperceived, wanted or unwanted, subtle or gross, mental, emotional or physical, internal or external. We literally become what we experience, no matter what its form. This understanding is a powerful tool in restoring balance and health. All we have to do is remove the cause, purify the system in some way, balance the natural tendencies of the doṣas, and provide a

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theme of rejuvenation. This understanding is more fundamental than trying to fix disease by interfering with some alleged “mechanism of disease.” We can destroy it at its very origins and cause. Of course, every disease gives telltale signs of specific doṣic involvement and this can be useful to eliminate the symptoms of disease on the level of symptoms, as well. Just to be clear about the usefulness of doṣas in relation to our modern taxonomy of disease, absolutely all disease can be understood with the application of these three principles. A couple of examples are rakta pitta (pitta in the blood) for bleeding disorders and vāta rakta (vāta pushing pitta in the blood) for gout. The physiology of disease is easily understood with these concepts.

On the point of each doṣha having two elements you had to make some statement, with an explanation, of how vāta, pitta, and kapha each is a realm of harmony of opposites, which is absolutely essential to its being able to function properly, at all. For example, fire and water are antagonists that need each other—fire needs to spread to all the molecules of food and ultimately to all cells of the body. Water controls the heat of the fire keeping it from consuming the body. On the other hand, water without fire begs the whole question of existence and intelligence. Fire maintains the proper quality (temperature and viscosity) and quantity of water in the body. Grading = 2 points for discussion of the theme of cooperation discussed properly.

Doṣas have subtle aspects as we hinted above. Their functional nature is subtle and this nature is given by numerous qualities, which taken together, are the doṣic operators. For example, vāta is composed of cold, dry, light, moving, rough, subtle, pervading, clear qualities; pitta is composed of hot, oily, sharp, moving, sour, liquid, light qualities; kapha is given by the qualities: smooth, solid, stable, dense, dull, heavy, cold, sweet, cloudy, slow, liquid, oily, and gross. These qualities also affect emotions and thinking. Thus by controlling doṣic influences (these qualities) we can exert an influence over the very things we think about and the way we interact with every thing we come into contact. Mental processes and emotions can be guided and modified with the application of a given set of qualities. Adding heat to a cold temperament can make it more warm and loving. Taking heat away from an angry person can do the same thing. By selecting the qualities we experience we can even experience new dimensions of our nature as something profound, subtle, all knowing, eternal and so on. For example, clarity of mind leads to new discoveries, deeper understandings of life, which become the causes for additional and more profound changes. The cause becomes the effect and the effect becomes a cause.

Because doṣas are really qualities in action we can understand and explain the nature and direction of change. All of nature functions in cycles. These cycles can be described as the ebb and flow of certain qualities, which are none other than the doṣas themselves. Knowing this we can anticipate future change and by taking appropriate action we can prevent imbalance from occurring before it begins. This notion gives rise to the importance of behavioral routines. It’s important to do the right things but at the correct time. Eating a big meal at midnight may satisfy hunger at that time but will the body be able to digest it and what about the rejuvenation the body normally does at this time? Again we see that the concept of doṣa has both curative and preventative meaning.

The other aspect of the doṣas is their structural or material expression. Vata is seen as gas or gas-like. There is some mass but very, very little. In the body its form might be O₂, CO₂, methane, indole, skatol, ammonia and so on. As gases they act to create dryness, lightness, movement, roughness, and so on. The expressions of pitta include HCl, pepsin, bile salts, bile pigments, hormones, neurotransmitters and neuropeptides. These substances give rise to directly or in catalytic manner heat, color, energy transformations, discrimination and understanding. Expressions of kapha include saliva, joint secretions, stomach mucus, cerebral spinal fluid, and all hard substances such as protein in muscle, cartilage or hair and calcium in bone, ligaments, and teeth. They do the secreting, lubricating, supporting, growing and so on. Thus this concept of doṣa has functional and structural ramifications. To know doṣa is to know both of its aspects just as we know a dollar bill both from its front and back.

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We discussed above the rule that we are what we experience and that changes in nature are governed by the doṣas. This implies that all of existence can be understood in a unified way. That is, nature is not independent of human life. Everything affects everything else. The unity of existence becomes a statement with a meaningful reality. Everything is governed by doṣas. The doṣas are affected by everything. What a magnificent interrelationship. Nothing is independent of anything else and there are no spare parts. Everything is meaningful because everything is one.

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