

**Guna: Introduction and its Importance****Dr. Sarika Yadav\***

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E-mail id: [ysarika19@gmail.com](mailto:ysarika19@gmail.com)**Abstract**

Ayurveda is the life science with prime goal of promotion of health and prevention of disease in healthy individuals and alleviation of disease in diseased. The basic principles of Ayurveda are necessary to be understood for the knowledge of this science. These basic principles are derived from various Darshan(philosophy). Ayurvediya Pharmacokinetics depends on the knowledge of these fundamental principles. These basic principles are Rasa, Guna (attribute), Virya, Vipaka and Prabhav. Each of these has its own importance in understanding Ayurvediya principles. Among these basic principles knowledge of Guna is of vital importance because these are very useful in knowing the mode of action of various Ayurvediya formulations and procedures. Hence hereby an effort is made to understand the Guna in detail and its importance.

**Key words:** Ayurveda, Darshan, Rasa, Guna, Prabhav.**Introduction**

The basic principles of Ayurveda draw their roots from the foundation of Darshana like Nyaaya, Vaisheshika, Vedanta and Saankhya. These principles highlight a noble concept of man and his origin. This existing knowledge of ancient Indian science says, the origin and cause behind all the creations of whole universe is “Avyakata” (the unmanifested matter), which itself is causeless i.e. no definite cause for its origin. This is also named as Moola Prakruti and it has 3 chief Mahaguna (attributes) “Satva, Raja & Tama” for its proper functioning. Further Ayurvediya basic fundamentals describe Guna in Sadapadartha. According to Vasiesika Darsana Sadapadartha are, viz (1) Guna (2) Dravya (3) Karma (4) Samanya (5) Visesa (6) Samavaya. Importance of Guna among Guna-Dravya-Karma is clearly understood because of its mention before the other two. Without Guna there is no use of Dravya and thus, no importance of its existence.

Each and every Dravya should consist either of the Guna. Guna is based on Dravya only. Dravya is receptacle for Guna and Guna is supported by Dravya. Hence the Guna reveals the significance of Dravya. Guna is called as Visheshan also.

All the Dravyas in the universe are having Guna. Hence the knowledge of Gunas is a must. In Ayurveda, the knowledge of Gunas is useful for the protection of health, as well as treatment of the diseases. Without the existence of Dravya, there will be no Karma (work) hence Guna are the main entities by virtue of which Dravya perform desired functions.

**Discussion****Nirukti(Etymology):**

The word Guṇa is originated from the root “Guṇ Āmantrane<sup>[1]</sup>”- the one which is capable enough to highlight the ability, to attract or to invite towards it. The word Guṇa has number of meanings as available in the different classics like, quality,

### **Meaning of Guna:**

- The unit which is independent to others is called primary or main. On the other hand which is dependent or bestowing shelter is subordinate or secondary. As Guna or attributes are dependent to Dravya (substance) these are called 'Gauna' (secondary).
- According to Samkhya philosophy three Maha Guna (Sattva, Raja, tama) are represented as Guna.
- Panini describes the Guna as an entity that resides in Dravya which performs various actions.
- The Hindu treatise Bhagwat Geeta describes Guna as the property of Prakriti, which helps to develop Karma.

### **Philosophical Aspect of Guna:**

The Darsana Shastra had referred the term Guna to explain certain philosophical concepts. Ayurveda maintains a similarity of views with Samkhya and Vaisesika Darsana in the context of its philosophical position, keeping the principle of the concept of Guna constant.

- In Shankhya Darshan, Mahaguna are said to be responsible for creation of whole universe.
- In the Vaisheshika Darshana, Guna is defined as that which remains in the Dravya and is devoid of Guna, i.e. Guna can not possess another Guna and is not a cause of the Samyoga and Vibhaga. So Guna has Dravya as foundation or basis and is devoid of any property.
- According to Rasavaishesika Guna has enormous properties; that is why is called as Vishva Lakshana Gunaah.
- Guna also indicates the whole community of Guna. A Dravya can give rise to another in the same way Guna also give rise to other.

Philosophers have described Guna as which is Asamvayi with Dravya. For example in a shirt, thread is Dravya and colour is Guna. The colour can be discoloured or changed but the thread is the Karana of shirt as it is the base. So thread is Samvayi Karana and the Guna is Asamvayi.

### **Ayurvediya Concept of Guna:**

According to Charaka<sup>[2]</sup>, Guna possesses inseparable concomitance (Samavaya sambandha) with Dravya and it is the cause for various actions and it itself is devoid of efforts. Here word 'Samavayi' indicates that Gunas reside in Samavaya Sambandha with its abode i.e. corresponding Dravya. Word 'Nischeshta' is included here to explain Swarupa of Guna. Guna are Nirgata Cheshta, in this way they differ from Karma. Charaka has emphasized the Karanatva of Guna by adding word 'Karanam' to the definition of Guna. Guna present in a Karana Dravya become Karana for Utpatti of Guna in Karya Dravya.

Also Acharya Charaka mentioned that Guna doesn't exist in other Guna – Guna Gunaashrayanoktah<sup>[3]</sup>...

In a nut shell Guna can be defined as a Karana which stays in Samavaya Sambandha in Dravya and is free from any type of Cheshta (Karma) and is Karana for Utpatti of similar Guna in Karya Dravya. In other words, Guna is the entity which is dependent to substance, do not possess attribute/ quality, is devoid of actions, and is Asamvayee cause in production of similar attributes.

### **Origin of Guna:**

From the unmanifest (Avyakta) or Prakruti which is Trigunatmak, Mahat (supreme intellect) having the same attributes, originates and from Mahat, Ahamkara (supreme ego) arises having the same Trigunatmak attributes. This Ahamkara is

further of three types-Vaikarika, Taijasika and Bhutadika. Out of them from Vaikarika Ahamkara with collaboration of Taijasa Ahamkara, eleven Indrias (5 Gyanendria, 5 Karmendria and 1 Manas) are emerged. From Bhutadika Ahamkara in association with Taijasika Ahamkara, five Tanmatra-Shabda, Sparsha, Roopa, Rasa and Gandha arise and from Tanmatra the Pancha Mahabhuta of related Tanmatra's i.e. Akasha, Vayu, Agni, Jala and Prithvi are originated<sup>[4]</sup>.

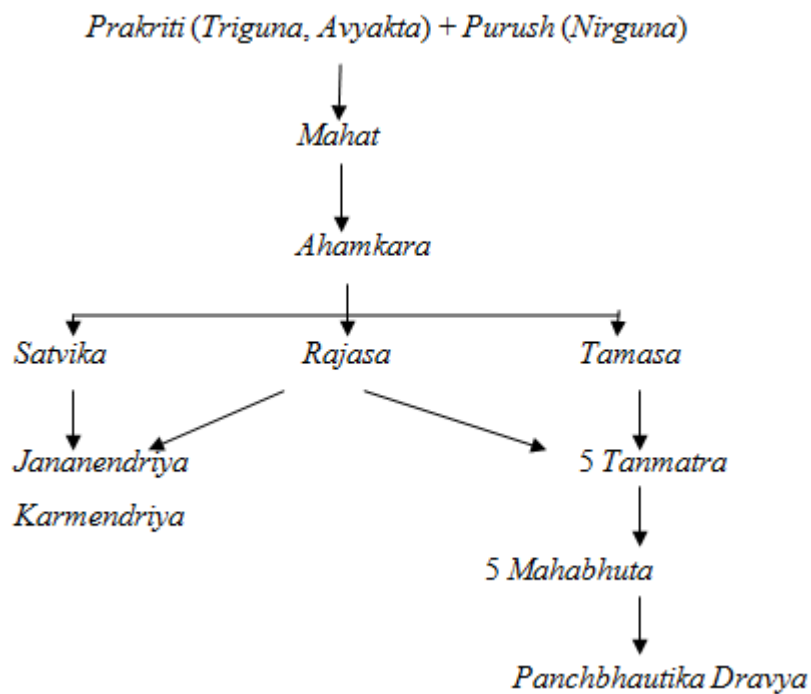
After Tanmatra and Mahabhoota get originated the whole universe is emerged from conjugation of Tanmatra and these give rise to various Mahabhuta which are said to be composed of its specific Guna and the Guna of previous Mahabhuta. i.e. Akasha has only Shabda Tanmatra but Vayu has both Shabda and Sparsha Tanmatra. In the same way, Agni Mahabhoota, has Shabda, Sparsha and Roopa Tanmatra.

After the process of Panchikarana, each Mahabhoota has qualities of all the Tanmatra in it.

Further Samkhya philosophy states that Triguna or Mahaguna are responsible for creation of whole universe. Further according to the dominancy and different combinations the twenty four Tattva and rest of the universe are emerged. Prakṛuti is a perfect balance of these Guṇa, but when they go away from equilibrium, they begin groping themselves in accordance with the modes of manifestations. This is described by Sāṁkhya as the evolution. The Guṇa are function like strands of rope they are responsible for the intricate web of existence of life.

<b>Satva</b>	<b>Raja</b>	<b>Tama</b>
Pr̥thvī	Apritī	Viśhada
Prakāśha	Pravṛtti	Niyamana
Laghu, Prakāśha	Chala	Guru andĀvarak

### GunaUtpatti



## Classification of Guna

Charaka Samhita<sup>[5]</sup> as per utility of attributes in anatomy, physiology and treatment, has suggested forty one number for attributes which has been divided in four groups-

Vishesha Guna- 5

Gurvadi Guna- 20

Adhyatmika Guna- 6

Paradi Guna- 10

**Saarthha:** Arthaah Shabdaadayo Jneya Gocaraa Vishayaa Gunaah<sup>[6]</sup>

Shabda, Sparsha, Roopa, Rasa and Gandha are the five Saarthha Guna. These are called as VisheshhaGuna. These are the attributes of Akashaadi five Mahabhuta (basic elements). They are also the Vishaya of 5 special senses and each Guna (attribute) is attached with specific (Vishesha) sense and Mahabhuta, hence they are also called as Visheshha Guna.

**Gurvadi<sup>[7]</sup>:** There are 20 Guna called as Gurvaadi Guna. They are Guru-Laghu, Manda-Teekshna, Hima-Ushna, Snigdha-Ruksha, Shlakshna-Khara, Sandra-Drava, Mridu-Kathina, Sthira-Manda, Sookshma-Sthoola and Vishada-Picchila. These Guna are also called as Sharirika Guna because they are related with the Sharir. These Guna are said to be of utmost importance because of their utility in the applied clinical science for the better knowledge of Triskandha Ayurveda<sup>[8]</sup> i.e. Hetu, Linga and Aushadh. While describing the concept of Dosha, Acharya have described different Guna at various places within the Samhita (e.g. the Guna of Vata<sup>[9]</sup>). These Guna are from these twenty Guna in various proportions and combinations.

Most of the Acharya have given 20 Gurvadi Guna and described these Guna in pairs. But there is variation in pairing or naming some Guna.

S. No.	Guna	Charak	Sushruta	Vagbhata	Nagarjuna	Bhavprakash
1.	Guru- Laghu	+	+	+	+	+
2.	Shita- Ushna	+	+	+	+	+
3.	Snigdha- Ruksha	+	+	+	+	+
4.	Manda- Tikshna	+	-	+	-	-
5.	Sthira- Sara	+	-	+	-	+
6.	Mridu- Kathina	+	-	+	-	-
7.	Vishada-Picchila	+	+	+	+	+
8.	Shlakshna- Khara	+	-	+	-	-
9.	Sthoola- Sukshma	+	-	+	-	+
10.	Sandra- Drava	+	+	+	-	-
11.	Tikshna- Shlakshna	-	-	-	-	+
12.	Mridu- Karkasha	-	-	-	-	+
13.	Drava- Sushka	-	-	-	-	+
14.	Aashu- Manda	-	-	-	-	+

15.	Mridu- Tikshna	-	+	-	+	-
16.	Sugandha-Durgandha	-	+	-	-	-
17.	Sara- Manda	-	+	-	-	-
18.	Aashu- Sukshma	-	+	-	-	-
19.	Vyavayi- Vikasi	-	+	-	-	-
20.	Shlakshna-Karkasa	-	+	-	-	-

**Aadhyatmika:** Knowledge or intellect (Buddhi), desire (Ichcha), hatred (Dwesh), happiness (Sukha), misery (Dukha) and effort (Prayatna) are the Aadhyatmika or AatmaGuna.

**Paraadi:** These are ten in number. Preponderance (Para), subordination (Apara), propriety (Yukti), number (Samkhya), combination (Samyoga), division (Vibhaga), separation (Prathaktva), measurement (Parimaan), transformation (Samskara) and repetition (Abhyasa) are the Paraadiguna<sup>[10]</sup>.

### Conclusion:

#### Importance of Guna :

Acharya Suśhruta defines Guna present in the form of "Gūṇanam Karmalaksanam<sup>[11]</sup>". Inferences about the Guna present in drugs are made on the basis of the action produced by them. That is various functions taking place in body are due to these Guna. Hence -

- Body functions and types of Dosha can better be understood if physiology of Guna (Sharir Guna) is learnt in detail.
- Dosha are described by Acharya's in term of their Guna (quality) and Karma (function) and these are perceived by their Guna (quality) and Karma (functions) in body.
- For example, if it is said that Kapha bears Guruquality. It is obvious that this Dosha is capable of carrying out all functions prescribed for Guru Guna even if these functions are not all mentioned in compendia.
- That's why (due to importance of Guna) all entity (Drug, Dosha, Dhatu, Mala) are described in term of their Guna.
- Function is outcome of Guna. This function is in fact carried out by symbiotic efforts of matter (Dravya) and quality (Guna) since both are inseparable. Absence of quality turns matter to be functionless. On the basis of Samanya (generic concomitance) and Vishesh (variant factor) factors Guna augment and diminish body entities.
- These Guna are responsible for Dosha Dhatu Samya and Vaishmya.
- These Guna also form the basis of treatment. For example Vata which is Ruksha, Sheeta, Laghu, Chala, Khara i.e. relieved by drugs and diet having opposite qualities in aggravated state and if decreased can be made normal by use of drugs and diet similar to its Guna. Also the Shaman modalities of treatment are based on Guna. Snehana (Snigdha), Brimhana (Guru), Swedan (Ushna), Lekhan (Tikshna), Stambhan (Sheeta), Rukshan (Ruksha).

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