



ix. doṣa - śārīrika and mānasika

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The concept of **Doṣa** is fundamental in Ayurveda, representing the physiological and psychological governing principles of the human body and mind. The term “Doṣa” is derived from the root “Dus,” meaning “to spoil,” as an imbalance in Doṣa leads to diseases. Ayurveda classified Doṣa into **Śārīrika (bodily)** and **Mānasika (mental)** categories.

Doṣa Nirukti (Etymology)

dūṣayanti iti doṣāḥ

(A.H.Su.1:6, Arunadatta)

Meaning: Doṣa is “that which vitiates” or disturbs. When aggravated, it causes decay, destruction, or disease.

Śārīrika Doṣa (Physical Doṣa)

The **three bodily Doṣas—Vata, Pitta, and Kapha**—are the functional entities of the body and are derived from the **Panchamahabhuta** (five fundamental elements). These Doṣas govern all physical and physiological processes.

3 types of Śārīrika Doṣa

In Ayurveda, doṣas are the **bio-energies** or fundamental regulatory principles in the body. They have both structural and functional dimensions:

1. **Vāta:** Governs **movement:** nerve impulses, circulation, respiration, and the motion of food through the digestive tract.
2. **Pitta:** Governs **digestion, transformation, and metabolism:** enzymatic activities, endocrine functions, and body temperature regulation.
3. **Kapha:** Governs **binding, stability, and lubrication:** body fluid balance, joint lubrication, and overall structural integrity.

Vata Doṣa

- **Elemental Basis:** Vayu + Akasha
- **Qualities (Gunas):** Dry (Ruksha), Light (Laghu), Cold (Sheeta), Subtle (Sukshma), Mobile (Chala), Rough (Khara)
- **Primary Function:** Governs movement (e.g., breathing, nerve impulses, circulation).
- **Location:** Colon, bones, skin, ears.
- **Imbalance Symptoms:** Constipation, dryness, anxiety, insomnia.

Pitta Doṣa

- **Elemental Basis:** Agni + Jala
- **Qualities (Gunas):** Hot (Ushna), Sharp (Tikshna), Slightly Oily (Snigdha), Light (Laghu), Liquid (Drava), Foul-smelling (Sasneha)
- **Primary Function:** Governs metabolism and transformation (e.g., digestion, hormonal activity).
- **Location:** Small intestine, liver, skin, blood, eyes.
- **Imbalance Symptoms:** Inflammation, acidity, skin disorders, anger.

Kapha Doṣa

- **Elemental Basis:** Prithvi + Jala
- **Qualities (Gunas):** Heavy (Guru), Cold (Sheeta), Oily (Snigdha), Soft (Mridu), Stable (Sthira), Slimy (Picchila)



- **Primary Function:** Governs structure, lubrication, and stability.
- **Location:** Lungs, stomach, joints, fat tissues.
- **Imbalance Symptoms:** Obesity, lethargy, mucus buildup, depression.

Subtypes of Doṣas

Each doṣa has five subtypes with specialized functions:

Vāta	Pitta	Kapha
Prāṇa	Pācaka	Kledaka
Udāna	Rañjaka	Bodhaka
Vyāna	Bhrajaka	Avalambaka
Samāna	Sādhaka	Śleṣaka
Apāna	Ālocaka	Tarpaka

Vāta Subtypes

1. **Prāṇa Vāta** - Governs inhalation, swallowing, and mental functions.
2. **Udāna Vāta** - Governs speech, expression, and upward movements.
3. **Vyāna Vāta** - Governs circulation and overall movement of blood and nutrients.
4. **Samāna Vāta** - Governs peristalsis and assimilation in the GI tract.
5. **Apāna Vāta** - Governs excretion, reproduction, and downward movements.

Pitta Subtypes

1. **Pācaka Pitta** - Governs digestion in the small intestine.
2. **Rañjaka Pitta** - Governs blood pigmentation (liver, spleen function).
3. **Bhrajaka Pitta** - Governs complexion and heat regulation of the skin.
4. **Sādhaka Pitta** - Governs mental functions like cognition, intelligence, and emotions.
5. **Ālocaka Pitta** - Governs visual perception and eye function.

Kapha Subtypes

1. **Kledaka Kapha** - Governs the moisture in the GI tract.
2. **Bodhaka Kapha** - Governs saliva and taste perception.
3. **Avalambaka Kapha** - Governs thoracic secretions and supports the heart and lungs.
4. **Śleṣaka Kapha** - Governs lubrication in joints.
5. **Tarpaka Kapha** - Governs cerebrospinal fluid and mental nourishment.

Mānasika Doṣa (Mental Doṣa)

The **two mental Doṣas**—**Rajas** and **Tamas**—represent the psychological attributes that govern the mind. These are influenced by the **Trigunas** (Sattva, Rajas, Tamas).

Rajas (Passion/Activity)

- **Nature:** Represents activity, dynamism, and desire.
- **Qualities:** Restlessness, ambition, ego, and attachment.
- **Imbalance Effects:** Leads to anger, stress, and hyperactivity.

Tamas (Ignorance/Inertia)

- **Nature:** Represents inertia, darkness, and delusion.
- **Qualities:** Laziness, confusion, lack of clarity, and ignorance.



- **Imbalance Effects:** Leads to depression, lack of motivation, and confusion.

Relationship Between Śārīrika and Mānasika Doṣa

- The **physical Doṣas** affect the mental state, and vice versa.
 - For example, Vata imbalance may lead to anxiety (Rajas) or fear (Tamas).
 - Kapha imbalance may result in depression (Tamas).
 - Pitta imbalance often results in anger or frustration (Rajas).
- **Sattva Guna**, the purest quality of the mind, helps maintain equilibrium in both **Śārīrika** and **Mānasika Doṣa**.

Clinical Importance

Understanding Doṣa (both Śārīrika and Mānasika) is critical for:

1. **Diagnosis:** Identifying imbalances and underlying causes of diseases.
2. **Treatment:** Customizing therapies such as Panchakarma, diet, and lifestyle changes.
3. **Prevention:** Promoting balance to maintain health and well-being.

This dual framework of **Śārīrika and Mānasika Doṣa** highlights the holistic approach of Ayurveda in integrating body, mind, and spirit for optimal health.

Mānasika Doṣas (Mental Doshas)

Though the text above focuses primarily on the three śārīrika doṣas (Vāta, Pitta, Kapha), Ayurveda also recognizes **Rajas** and **Tamas** as the two **mānasika (mental) doṣas**:

- **Rajas** – Governs passion, activity, and emotional ups and downs. When imbalanced, it can cause restlessness, anger, and frustration.
- **Tamas** – Governs inertia, darkness, and ignorance. When imbalanced, it can cause lethargy, delusion, and depression.

Balancing these doṣas (both śārīrika and mānasika) is central to Ayurvedic practice for maintaining health and preventing disease.

Summary

- **Sāmānya and Viśeṣa:** Fundamental principles of increase (sāmānya) and decrease (viśeṣa) through similarities or opposites.
- **Ṣaḍ Padārtha Siddhānta:** A sixfold categorization (dravya, guṇa, karma, sāmānya, viśeṣa, samavāya) describing the nature of reality in Ayurveda.
- **Doṣas:** Structural and functional units in the body (Vāta, Pitta, Kapha) and mind (Rajas, Tamas). Proper regulation of doṣas, guided by understanding sāmānya-viśeṣa, is essential for health.

By integrating these concepts—**Sāmānya-Viśeṣa**, **Ṣaḍ Padārtha**, and **Doṣa**—Ayurveda provides a comprehensive model of how to maintain equilibrium and treat imbalances in both body and mind.