

GUNA

Introduction

Gunas means qualities of a substance. Any substance has a given set of qualities which are embedded within it and are related to the substance with an inseparable relationship.

NIRUKTI

THE WORD GUNA IS DERIVED FROM THE DHATU GUNAM. IT IS AS

गुण्यते आमन्त्रयते लोक अनेन इतत गुणाः

This means Guna is the main factor or property of a dravya by which it attracts every thing in it.

If there is no guna then dravya becomes in active and dull.

For example if we take an iron road it is dark black in colour and heavy and metallic in nature. these all are the property of iron road. On the base of this property we can identify the iron road. So we are identifying the dravya by its physical properties.

समवयी तु निश्चेष्टाः करणं गुणाः । (CH SU 1/15)

Guna is the one which is located in dravya inherently is the causative agent is devoid of property and action. So it means that guna it self has no action but when its adjoined with dravya then they can do action.

Guna sankhya

सार्था गुर्वादयो बुद्धिः प्रयत्नान्ताः परादयः।

गुणाः प्रोक्ताः . प्रयत्नादि कर्म चेष्टितमुच्यते॥४९॥

Acharya Charak Classified guna under these headings.

➤ SAARTHAGUNA

➤ GURVADI GUNA

➤ Paradi guna

➤ Budhi adi guna.

Broadly these qualities mentioned in Ayurveda are classified into two categories

➤ Adibhoutika gunas

➤ Adhyatmika gunas

Adibhautika gunas

1. Aadibhoutika Qualities

Adibhautika means 'pertaining to living beings'. Therefore the qualities explained in this context are related to the living beings.

Adibhoutika qualities are further classified into –

a. Samanya Gunas –

These are set of general qualities.]

These qualities are further classified into –

➤ Gurvadi gunas – heaviness, lightness, coldness etc. 20 qualities

➤ Paradi gunas – para, apara etc 10 qualities

b. Vishishta Gunas –

These are set of special qualities.

These are five in number i.e.

Shabda – sound

Sparsha – touch

Rupa – sight

Rasa – taste

Gandha – smell

Adhyatmika

2. Adhyatmika qualities / Qualities of Atma

➤ Adhyatmika means ‘pertaining to the soul’. Therefore these qualities are related to the soul, i.e. life element. These qualities are six in number.

- Ichcha – desire
- Dwesha – hatred
- Sukha – pleasure
- Dukha – pain
- Prayatna – effort
- Buddhi – intellect

Guruvadi

a. Gurvadi qualities

Gurvadi qualities are 20 in number. Since these qualities are related to the tissues and substances of the body, they are also called as Shareerika Gunas. Shareerika means ‘pertaining to the body’.

Below enlist edare 20 Guruvadigunas

- Guru guna–heaviness quality
- Laghu guna–lightness quality (read more about laghu quality)
- Sheeta guna–cold quality
- Ushna guna–hot quality
- Snigdha guna–unctuousness quality
- Ruksha guna–non-unctuousness quality
- Manda guna–dullness quality (read more about manda quality)
- Teekshna guna–sharpness quality
- Sthira guna–immobility quality

- Sara guna–mobility quality
- Mrudu guna–softness quality
- Kathina guna–hardness quality
- Vishada guna–clearness quality (read about vishada quality)
- Pichchila guna–sliminess / stickiness quality
- Shlakshna guna–smoothness quality
- Khara guna–roughness quality
- Sukshma guna–fineness quality
- Sthula guna–bulkiness quality (read about sthula quality)
- Sandraguna–solidity quality
- Dravaguna–liquidity quality

When we see these qualities, they are actually 10 qualities + 10 opposite qualities of those 10 qualities. Totally they are 20 in number.

No	Quality	Opposite Quality
1	Guru – heaviness	Laghu – lightness
2	Sheeta – cold	Ushna – heat
3	Snigdha – unctuousness	Ruksha – Non-unctuousness
4	Manda – dullness	Teekshna – sharpness
5	Sthira – immobility	Sara – mobility (read sara guna)
6	Mrudu – softness	Kathina – hardness
7	Vishada – clearness	Pichchila – sliminess, stickiness
8	Shlakshna – smoothness	Khara – roughness
9	Sukshma – fineness	Sthula – bulkiness
10	Sandra – solidity	Drava – fluidity

Guna by different acharyas

CHARAK & VAGBHAT	SUSRUT
GURU	GURU
LAGHU	LAGHU
SHEETA /HIMA	SHEETA
USHNA	USHNA
SNIGDHA	SNIGDHA
RUKSHA	RUKSHA
MANDA	MANDA
TEEKSHNA	TEEKSHNA
PISCHILA	PISCHILA
VISHADA	VISHADA
sthula	-
shuskshm	shuskshm
mrudu	mrudu
kathina	-
sakshlan	sakshlan

khar	karksh
sithar	-
sar	sar
sandra	sandra
drava	drava
	Sugndha,durgndha
	vyavayi
	asukari
	vikasi

Guna and their pachmhabhuat and action

Guna	Bhoota	Dosaghnata	Anya karma
Guru	P + J	K vruddhi V kshaya	Sthaulya karam (obesity) malavruddhikara (stool formation) santarpana (nourishment) Aalasya kara (laziness)

Laghu	A+V	V vruddhi K kshaya	Karshya karam (thinn) malakshaya (reduce stool) Apatarpan (Mal nutrition) varna Ropak (healing property)
Seeta (Hima)	J+V	VK vruddhi P kshaya	Datuvruddhikar (nourshiment) Cooling effect Svedahara (antisweat)
Ushna	T	P vruddhi V K- kshaya	Dhatushiithilyakara, (loosen the tissues) Sveda (sweating) murcha (unconsunious) daha (burning) trushna (thirst)
Snigdha	J	K kara V hara	Balyakara (strength) vrushya (aphrodisiac) Mridutva (softness)
Ruksha	V	V kara K hara	BalyaVarnahara (decrease strengthen) rukshana (dryness) Kathinata (hardness)
Manda	P+J	K vardak P shamak	Gatiavarodha (obstruction) chirakari (chronic) Alpakriyata (slow action)

Teekshna	T	P vardhak V K hara	Srotogami (quickly spreading) Dahpakkar , lekhankari
Slakshna	J	K vardak	Jeevniy (antioxidant) balya (strength) bruhana (nourishment)
Ch, Vag Khara Su- Karkasa	V	V vardak	Lekhana (scraping) Datukshya (decrease the tissue) mala soshaka (absorbed waste)
Sandra	P+J	K vrudhi	dathu vrudhi (increase tissue) Shareeraprasadana (beauty to bodies) Srotorodha (obstruction)
Drava	J	K P vrudhi	Kledana (moistness) datu mala vrudhi (increase mala)
Mrudu	A+ J	Kvrudhi	Mrudutwa (softness) Snehan (oleation) Brumhana (nourishment) Malavrudhi.

Kathina	P	V vrudhi	Rukshana (dryness) 42 Stambana (to stop) Mala kshaya (decrease waste)
Sthira	P	K vrudhi	Stambana (to stop) Brumhana (nourishment)
Sara / Chala	J+v	V P vrudhi	Anuloman (downward) lekhana (scraping)
Sthula	P	K vrudhi	Srotovarodha (obstruction) Staulyakari (bulkiness)
Sukshma	V+ A+T	V vrudhi	Srotoshodak (purify channels) laghu paki (minuteness)
Visada	Purthvi Vyu Akash tej	V vrudhi K kshaya	Kshalan(washing) vrana ropaka (heal wound) Langhanakara (lightness)
Pichila	Jala	K vrudhi V kshaya	Lepan (covering) balya (strength) Sandanakara (adjoining) Gurutwakara (heaviness)

Gurvadi Gunas with Pancha Mahabhuta

1. Guru guna – heaviness

This quality contributes to the weight and gravity of substance. If a food is said to possess heavy quality, it means that it is hard to digest or takes a longer time to get digested. This is because of the abundance of earth and water elements contained in these substances. Kapha Dosha is made up of earth and water elements. A person of Kapha constitution is slow and steady in his actions and thoughts. This is because of the heaviness quality in them due to earth and water elements.

2. Laghu Guna – Lightness

This quality is opposite to Guru guna (heaviness). It contributes to lightness in weight of a substance. In terms of food, it can be explained as foods that are easy to digest or that which undergo quick digestion.

Lightness is due to abundance of air and ether elements. Vata Dosha is made up of air and ether elements. A person of Vata constitution is very quick and unstable in his actions and thoughts. This is because of lightness quality in his body due to air and ether elements.

3. Sheeta Guna – Coldness

This quality contributes to the cold nature of substances. Coldness is related to water and air element. Water is the basis of coldness quality. In its normal temperature, water is cold to touch. We feel cold when exposed to cold breeze. This is because of Sheeta guna (cold quality) of water and air. A person of Vata body constitution cannot tolerate cold climates because there is already an excess

of cold quality in him due to Vata Dosha (due to air element). A Pitta constitution person will feel comfortable in low temperatures as his body has excess of hotness (ushna guna) due to fire element predominance.

4. Ushna Guna – Hotness

When this quality is present in a substance, it is said to be hot in nature. It is opposite to cold quality (Sheeta guna). Hotness is a quality which can be felt by touch. We would experience heat when we touch hot water. When hotness as a quality is present in food substances, it means that the food is hot in potency, burning and corrosive in nature. Hotness quality is related to fire element. Fire is the basis of hot quality. Fire naturally has heat in it and fire is hot on touch. A person of Pitta constitution develops symptoms like redness in the eyes, excessive sweating and burning sensation of the skin when exposed to sunlight. This is because heat is naturally more in Pitta constitution persons (due to Pitta which has fire element) and a slight exposure to sunlight which is also hot in nature aggravates hotness in them.

5. Singdha Guna – Unctuousness

This quality contributes to oily or unctuous nature of a substance. It is opposite to dry quality. Foods and medicines of unctuous quality are administered to counteract the effect of excessive dryness in the body. Unctuousness is a special quality of Water element. Therefore Snigdha quality is defined in terms of its capacity to induce unctuousness in the body. The property of water to produce wetness is also present in the unctuous quality. Just as water acts as binding substance between two materials and makes the dry things wet, unctuous quality too binds the cells and tissues and removes dryness prevailing in them. The skin of a Kapha constitution person is soft and supple and not dry. This is due to predominance of Kapha Dosha which is made up of water element. The same water element in Snigdha guna renders unctuous nature to substances.

6. Ruksha Guna – Dryness

This quality contributes to dryness or non-unctuousness of substances. It is opposite to unctuous quality. Foods and medicines of dry quality are administered to counteract the excessive unctuousness in the body. Dryness is a special quality of Air element. Therefore Ruksha guna is defined in terms of its capacity to bring about dryness in the tissues and body. The property of air to produce dryness is present in Ruksha guna. For example, the skin of a Vata constitution person will be dry. This is due to predominance of Vata Dosha which means increased air element in the body.

7. Manda Guna – Dullness

Slow acting or dullness is explained as Manda in Ayurveda. The substance in which it is present is said to be dull in nature. Dullness is defined on the basis of slowness. Foods and medicines which work slowly and pacify the doshas over a period of time are called Manda. Dullness is made up of earth and water elements. We can see that earth and water are basically heavy in nature. Due to this heaviness they are also dull and slow acting. Medicines and foods rich in earth and water elements will naturally tend to act slowly in the body and induce dullness. For example, in a person of Kapha constitution, the activities are slow and dull. This is due to predominance of Kapha Dosha which means a predominance of earth and water elements.

8. Teekshna Guna – Sharpness

Teekshna Guna means ‘sharpness’ quality. Substance which has this quality are said to be sharp in action. It is opposite to dullness quality i.e. manda guna. Sharpness is defined on the basis of quickness and intensiveness with which things work and on the ability of things to cause cleansing and expulsion of materials in the body. Sharpness is a natural quality present in fire element. Likewise, sharpness is predominantly made up of fire element. We can see that fire element is basically sharp, intense and deep penetrating in nature. Due to this sharpness, materials having this quality are fast acting and make quick impact. Medicines and foods

rich in fire element will naturally tend to act quickly in the body and induce sharpness. Example – spices.

9. Sthira Guna – Stability

Sthira Guna means ‘immobility or stable’ quality. It is present in some substances and those substances are said to be stable in nature. That which has the capacity and strength to hold things back, i.e. capacity to retain things is called Sthira guna i.e. stability or immobility quality. Stability is the quality of earth element. All things which are solid are made up predominantly of earth element. We see that solid materials are in a state of rest, immobile and stable unless mobilised by outward pressure or force greater than their weight or displaces them from their static position.

Medicines and foods rich in earth element will naturally tend to bring about immobility to greater extent.

10. Sara Guna – Mobility

Sara Guna means ‘mobility’ quality. It is present in some substances and those substances are said to be unstable in nature. It is opposite to Sthira guna i.e. immobility quality. That which has a capacity and strength to put things in motion, to mobilize and expel things is called Sara guna. That, on entering the body mobilizes and expels flatus and waste products out of the body, mainly the faeces, is called Sara guna. Mobility or instability quality is related to water and air element.

11. Mrudu Guna – Softness

Mrudu Guna means ‘softness’ quality. Substance which has this quality is said to be soft in nature. Softness (mrudu) is defined on the basis of capability of foods, medicines and activities to induce softness and laxity in body parts. Therefore,

foods and medicines which cause softness and laxity in body parts are considered as having softness quality. Softness quality is related to water and space elements. Therefore softness quality is formed by the combination of water and ether elements.

12. Kathina Guna – Hardness

Kathina Guna means ‘hardness’ quality. A substance which has this quality is said to be hard in nature. It is opposite to Mrudu guna i.e. softness quality. They also balance each other. Hardness is related to earth element. Therefore hardness quality is formed by presence and predominance of earth element in any substance.

Medicines and foods rich in earth element will naturally induce hardness in body parts.

13. Vishada Guna – Clearness

Vishada Guna means ‘clearness’ quality. Substances which have this quality are said to be clear in nature. Clearness quality would remove excessive sliminess, thereby removing blocks and treat conditions caused by increased sliminess. This quality also causes separation and differentiation of different body parts and thus becomes responsible for loss of adhesiveness between structures and loss of integrity in body. Clearness quality is related to four elements i.e. earth, air, fire and ether elements. Therefore clearness quality is formed by the presence and predominance of the above mentioned four elements in any substance.

Medicines and foods rich in earth and other elements mentioned above will naturally induce clearness in body parts.

14. Picchila Guna – Sliminess

Picchila Guna means ‘sliminess’ quality. It is present in some substances and those substances are said to be slimy and sticky in nature. It is opposite to Vishada guna i.e. clearness quality. Sliminess and clearness are opposite qualities. They also

balance each other. Those which on entering the body causes adherence of structures with each other (lepana) are called Picchila guna. This quality has the property of unifying and integrating things. It also destroys clearness quality and causes heaviness in the body. Sliminess quality is related to water element. Therefore sliminess quality is formed by predominance of water element in any substance.

15. Shlakshna Guna – Smoothness

Shlakshna Guna means ‘smoothness’ quality. It is present in some substances and those substances are said to be smooth in nature. Smoothness is defined on basis of capability of foods, medicines and activities to produce healing effect in the body. Therefore, foods and medicines which heal damaged tissues, wounds and ulcers and induce smoothness in body parts are considered to have Shlakshna guna i.e. smoothness quality. There are different opinions regarding elemental relationship of smoothness quality.

Master Sushruta has opined that this quality is rich in water element just like Picchila guna i.e. sliminess quality.

According to Master Charaka, it is rich in space element.

Master Nagarjuna is of opinion that this quality is made up of fire element.

But seeing the action of smoothness qualities, Sushruta’s opinion seems to be appropriate.

16. Khara Guna – Roughness

Khara Guna means ‘roughness’ quality. Substances having this quality are said to be rough in nature. It is opposite to Shlakshna guna i.e. smoothness quality. Roughness and smoothness are opposite qualities and are also mutually balancing. Roughness is a quality which can be perceived by touch. It is a feel when you touch the dry bark of a tree or a sand paper. Inside the body, roughness can be known through its action, i.e. its ability to cause roughness, scrape and deplete

tissues, increase Vata and Vata symptoms including dryness, roughness of the body parts and degeneration. There are different opinions regarding the elemental relationship of roughness quality.

According to Master Charaka, it is predominant in air and earth elements.

According to Master Sushruta, roughness is predominant in fire and air elements. In spite of difference of opinions, air is the common factor in roughness; therefore it is rich in air element.

17. Sukshma Guna – Minuteness

Sukshma Guna means ‘fineness’ quality. Substance with this quality is said to be very fine in nature. It is opposite to Sthula guna i.e. bulkiness quality. Fineness and bulkiness are opposite qualities and are also mutually balancing. Fineness quality is mainly related to three elements i.e. fire, air and space elements.

Combination of air and space elements makes up Vata dosha. Therefore fineness which is formed by and dependent on these elements also increase Vata in body. Combination of these three elements in balanced proportions is very intense and quick acting. They enable easy dissolution and penetration into minute channels of the body, into each cell and small channels of body and hence spread in the body.

18. Sthula Guna – Bulkiness

Sthula Guna means ‘bulkiness / stoutness’ quality. Substance in which it is present is said to be bulky in nature. It is opposite to Sukshma guna i.e. minuteness quality. Bulkiness and fineness are opposite qualities and are also mutually balancing. Sthula is defined on the basis of capability of foods, medicines and activities to cause obstruction in channels and tissues owing to its heavy and large size and its inability to move easily in the body. Bulkiness quality is mainly related to earth element.

19. Sandra Guna – Solidity

Sandra Guna means solidity or density quality. It is present in some substances and those substances are said to be solid in nature. Solidity is defined on the basis of the capability of foods, medicines and activities to nourish the organs and tissues in the body. It also increases thickness and density of tissues in a healthy way contributing to stability of the body and maintenance of health. Solidity is predominantly formed from earth element.

20. Drava Guna – Liquidity

It is present in some substances and those substances are said to be liquid in nature. Liquidity is defined on the basis of the capability of foods, medicines and activities which being subtle and fine in nature, to flow freely and move in all parts of the body in an uninterrupted way. This quality has the capacity to drip through, dissolve, liquefy, moisten things, circulate, ooze and flow in the body. That which is subtle and perforate everywhere and in everything is called Drava guna i.e. liquidity quality. That which is responsible for flow of things is called liquidity or is said to possess liquidity quality. Liquidity is predominantly formed from water element. Water element too has liquidity quality in it.

Mention of additional qualities by Sushruta –

Sushruta has also mentioned additional qualities i.e.

VYAVAYI

- The quality by which the dravya first spread in the body and thendigest it is known as vyavayi. Vayu and aakash maha bhuta predominance. Ex. Ahiphena(opium)

VIKASI

- The dravya spreads in the body and cause oja kshaya,dhatukshaya,and sandhi shaithilya it is known as vikasi.

Vayu maha bhuta predominance Ex. pugi phala(eric nut)

AASUKARI

- The quality that spreads very quickly in the body like oil in water in known ASAASHUKARI.

VAYUMAHABHUTA predominance.

SUGANDHA

- It gives comfort and taste.

VAYUMAHABHUTA predominance.

So in universe all the matters originated with panchmahabhut,and which eliment is high according to that their guna will be.