

CONCEPT OF ASHRAY-ASHRAYI BHAVA WITH ITS CLINICAL UTILITY

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ABSTRACT

In *Ayurveda*, health is characterized by a harmonious balance of *Doshas*, the proper operation of *Dhatus* and *Malas*, as well as a stable state of mind, body, and spirit. A key principle that governs this balance is the concept of *Ashraya–Ashrayi Bhava*, which illustrates the reciprocal relationship between *Doshas* (functional entities) and *Dhatus* (structural tissues). This doctrine suggests that *Doshas* inhabit specific *Dhatus*, and any change in one results in corresponding alterations in the other. This article explores the theoretical framework and clinical relevance of *Ashraya–Ashrayi Bhava*, illustrating how the principle of similarity (*Samanya*) contributes to वृद्धि (increase), while dissimilarity (*Vishesha*) leads to क्षय (decrease). It highlights that although *Pitta* and *Kapha* typically increase alongside their corresponding *Dhatus*, *Vata* exhibits a unique inverse relationship with *Asthi* Dhatu, where its aggravation leads to bone depletion. This connection establishes a solid basis for diagnosis and the planning of treatment, informing the application of nutrition, medications, and therapeutic interventions. Consequently, *Ashraya–Ashrayi Bhava* is considered a fundamental concept in *Ayurveda* for preserving physiological equilibrium and attaining successful clinical results.

KEYWORDS: *Ashraya*, *Ashrayi*, *Dosha*, *Dhatu*.

INTRODUCTION

An important concept in *Ayurveda* is called *Ashraya–Ashrayi Bhava*.

The word "*Ashraya*" means "substratum," "seat," or "host," and the word "*Ashrayi*" means "the thing that lives on or depends on the *Ashraya*."

In this principle, *Ashraya* refers to the substratum (*Dhatu*) and *Ashrayi* refers to the resident (*Dosha*). *Ashraya–Ashrayi Bhava* is an essential *Ayurvedic* concept that describes the relationship between *Doshas* (functional entities) and *Dhatus* (structural tissues). *Doshas* reside in specific *Dhatus* and influence their structure and functions. According to classical texts, *Vata* resides in *Asthi* (bone), *Pitta* resides in *Rakta* (blood) and *Kapha* resides in the remaining *Dhatus* such as *Rasa*, *Mamsa*, *Meda*, *Majja*, and *Shukra*. This establishes a close interdependence between *Doshas* and *Dhatus*, where changes in one directly affect the other.

तत्रास्थनि द्विस्थतो वायुः, नित्तं त, स्वेदरक्तयोः। श्लेष्मा शेषेष, तेषामाश्रयाश्रयणं नमथुः॥

Doshas and their Ashraya

The *Doshas* - *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha* - are fundamental bio energies that govern physiological activities. Each *Dosha* has specific seats (*Ashraya*) where they predominantly reside and exert their functions.

The *Doshas* - *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha* - are essential bioenergies that regulate physiological functions. Each *Dosha* has specific locations (*Ashraya*) where they primarily reside and perform their roles.

1. *Vata* *Dosha Ashraya*: *Pakvashaya* (large intestine) and *Asthi* *Dhatu* (bone tissue).
Physiological Role: Controls movement, communication, and neurological functions.
Clinical Implications: Conditions such as constipation, arthritis, and osteoporosis are signs of *Vata* imbalance affecting its *Ashraya*.

2. *Pitta* *Dosha Ashraya*: *Amasaya* (stomach) and *Raktadhatu* (blood tissue).
Physiological Role: Controls digestion, metabolism, and thermoregulation.

Clinical Implications: Diseases like hyperacidity, jaundice, and inflammatory disorders arise from *Pitta* imbalance.

3. *Kapha* *Dosha Ashraya*: *Medadhatu* (fat tissue) and *Uras* (chest).
Physiological Function: Offers immunity, lubrication, and stability.

Clinical Implications: *Kapha* imbalance is associated with diseases like diabetes, obesity, and

respiratory congestion.

यदेकस्य तदन्यस्य वर्धिक्षिणौषम्।

अद्धस्थमारुतयोर्वैवं, प्रायो वृद्धिनहध तिधणात्॥

Same actions or factors are responsible for both the decrease and increase of doṣas and the dhātus.

Causes or activities that lead to an increase in dhātus will also cause an increase in doṣas, and similarly, those that increase doṣas will also lead to an increase in dhātus.

However, this rule does not apply in the case of *Asthi* (bone) and vāyu (vāta).

Substances having snigdha (unctuous) and madhura (sweet) properties, which promote the increase of *Asthi*, lead to the decrease of vāyu. On the other hand, substances with rūkṣa (dry) and tikta (bitter) properties, which increase vāyu, cause depletion of *Asthi* due to apatarpaṇa (undernourishment).

सवधदा सवधभावािं सामान्यं वृद्धिकारणम्। हासहेतु, नवधशेषश्च, प्रवृत्तरुभयस्य ॥

The principle of *Samanya* (similarity) and *Vishesha* (dissimilarity) regulates the relationship, where similarity leads to increase and dissimilarity leads to decrease.

Dhatus and their Interactions

Similarities in Gunas of *Pitta* Dosha and Rakta Dhatu

Pitta	Ushna	Visra	Drava	Sara
Rakta	Ushna	Visrata	DraVata	Sara

The symptomatology of many diseases that manifests due to Dushta Rakta and *Pitta* is because of *Ashraya Ashrayi Bhava* of Rakta and *Pitta*. In Raktapitta, *Pitta* increase by Nidana and reaches Rakta as both have similar Yoni i.e. *Teja Maha Bhoota*, due to its heat it increases the *Dravata* of *Rakta* Dhatu and in turn leads to *Pitta Vriddhi*. Thus vitiation of *Pitta* is having its effect on *Rakta Dhatu*.

Similarities in Gunas of Kapha Dosha and Dhatu

Kapha	Snighdha	Guru	Slakshana	Mrudu	Sthira	Sandra	Picchila	Shwetha	Sara
<i>Rasa</i>	<i>Snighdha</i>							<i>Shwetha</i>	<i>Sara</i>
<i>Mamsa</i>	<i>Snighdha</i>	<i>Guru</i>			<i>Sthira</i>		<i>Picchila</i>		
<i>Meda</i>	<i>Snighdha</i>	<i>Guru</i>	<i>Slakshana</i>	<i>Mrudu</i>		<i>Sandra</i>			
<i>Majja</i>	<i>Snighdha</i>		<i>Slakshana</i>	<i>Mrudu</i>		<i>Sandra</i>			
<i>Shukra</i>	<i>Snighdha</i>					<i>Sandra</i>			

In *Prameha Samprapthi* the *Bahudrava Sleshma* vitiates *Meda* first which is due to *Samana Guna*. *Kapha Dosha* is similar to *Dhatu*s such as *Rasa*, *Meda*, *Majja* in terms of common presence of *Jala Mahabhuta* and holds similarity with *Mamsa* and *Meda Dhātu*.

For *Vata* and *Asthi* *Khara Guna* of *Vata* is similar with *Khara Guna* of *Asthi* but *Laghu* and *Chala Guna* of *Vata* is opposite to that of *Guru* and *Sthira Guna* of *Asthi* *Vayu* is located in *Asthi*. Due to its lightness, *Vayu* keeps the bones light. Bones are basically made up of *Prithvi Mahabhuta* – Earth element. Therefore they are hard tissues and support the body frame.

Vata Dosha located in this earthy bone, is made up of *Vayu* and *Akasha Mahabhutas* (Air and Space elements). This enables the body to move easily on its joints. The space created by *Vayu* in the bones helps *Majja* (bone marrow) to occupy the interior of the bones.

Clinically, this idea directs treatment and aids in the explanation of illness mechanisms. *Doshas* have an impact on *Dhatu*s according to their(qualities); if both have similar qualities, the *Dhatu* rises, but opposing qualities cause vitiation or depletion. In *Raktapitta*, aggravated *Pitta* vitiates *Rakta Dhātu*, leading to bleeding disorders, while in *Prameha*, vitiated *Kapha* affects *Meda Dhātu*, causing metabolic disturbances. In old age, natural aggravation of *Vata* leads to *Asthi Kshaya* (bone loss), demonstrating the relevance of this concept in physiological aging as well.

Modern Integration

The link between *Vata* and *Asthi* (bone tissue) is an essential example of an inverse *Ashraya-Ashrayi* association. In Ayurveda, as age advances, the natural increase in *Vata* marked by dryness (*ruksha*) and porosity (*khara*) closely correlates to the depletion of bone tissue (*Asthi Kshaya*). Modernly, this is the exact trajectory of Osteoporosis and Osteopenia. As hormonal shifts occur, particularly the reduction of estrogen or testosterone, bone resorption by osteoclasts outpaces bone creation by osteoblasts. The increase in *Vata* can be interpreted as the acceleration of catabolic signaling and cellular senescence, resulting in a detectable decrease in Bone Mineral Density (BMD). Ayurveda use *Basti* to nourish the bone through the gut-bone axis, while modern medicine employs Vitamin D/Calcium supplementation to rebuild the structural matrix.

In the context of *Ashraya-Ashrayi Bhava*, the stomach lining acts as the *Ashraya* (the container or substrate), while the gastric acid signifying *Pitta* is the *Ashrayi* (the resident

energy). When Pitta shows as excess Hydrochloric Acid (HCl), the primary goal is to reduce the acidity of the stomach juice. Modern medicine does this with Proton Pump Inhibitors (PPIs) and H2 Blockers. These drugs operate as metabolic coolants by switching off the cellular pumps that create acid. This prevents from the degradation of the stomach lining, which is the same as employing Sheeta (cooling) herbs like Shatavari or Yashtimadhu to alleviate the gut.

The relation between *Kapha* and *Meda* (adipose tissue) demonstrates the basic mechanics of Dyslipidemia. *Kapha*, which affects stability and lubrication, shares many qualities with *Medas*. *Medo- Vriddhi*, or *Ashraya* (adipose tissue), increases proportionately to an increase in *Kapha*. From a contemporary standpoint, this is the pathological build-up of visceral fat and the ensuing insulin resistance. Modern medicine uses statins and metabolic activators to control dyslipidaemia and lower the risk of cardiovascular disease, same as Ayurveda tackles this with *Lekhana* (scraping) therapies and *Ushna* (heated) herbs like *Guggulu*.

CONCLUSION

Overall, *Ashraya–Ashrayi Bhava* plays an important role in understanding disease pathogenesis, planning treatment, and maintaining health. It helps in identifying which *Dhatu* is affected based on *Dosha* imbalance and guides the selection of appropriate diet, medicines, and therapeutic procedures. This principle also emphasizes the importance of maintaining harmony between *Doshas* and *Dhatu*s for prevention and effective management of diseases.

In therapeutics, this concept is invaluable for designing targeted treatment strategies. By applying the principles of similarity and dissimilarity, physicians can either nourish depleted *Dhatu*s or pacify aggravated *Doshas* with precision. It also guides the selection of appropriate *Rasayana* (rejuvenative therapies), *Panchakarma* procedures, and dietary regimens aimed at restoring structural and functional harmony.

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