

## A REVIEW ARTICLE ON OJAS

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## ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is an integral system of natural health care. The objective of *Ayurveda* is to maintain the health in a healthy individual and to cure the illness. Along with the *Siddhant* of *Tridosha*, *Panchmahabhuta* a unique concept of *Ojas* has been explained by former system of medicine. *Ojas* is the element in the body which gives power, vigor, vitality, improves immunity power and take care of wellbeing of body. It is present throughout the body like ghee exists in the milk or honey exists in the flower. The supreme essence of all *Saptidhatu*s from *Rasa* to *Sukra* is known as *Ojas*, on which the strength of the body depends. Which is identical with "Vital power."<sup>[1]</sup> The most important thing in relation to health and disease is immunity of the body *Vyadhikshamatva* (Immunity) is described in *Ayurveda* and this concept is considered equivalent to immunity. The word immunity means the state of protection from infectious disease.

**KEYWORDS:** *Ayurved*, *Ojas*, Immunity, *Dhatu*.

## INTRODUCTION

The extract of *Sapta Dhatus* (seven bodily tissues as from *Rasa* to *Shukra Dhatu*), i.e. *Rasa* (plasma and lymph), *Rakta* (blood cells), *Mamsa* (connective and muscular tissue), *Meda* (body fats e.g. adipose tissue), *Asthi* (bones), *Majja* (bone marrow) & *Shukra* (semen) is called *Oja* and it is the seat for strength, hence called *Bala*. *Ojas* is *Sara* (essence) of all *dhatu*s located in the heart, it pervades all over body and control the working of the body. It is viscous, *Snigdha* (unctuous), *Somatmaka* (preponderant in watery principal), clear (transparent) and *Raktamishat Spatikam* (slight reddish yellow in color). By its loss (destruction, absence) death will occur and by its presence the body (and life) sure to survive. *Oja* is the reason for different condition and activities related with the body. This *Ojas* or strength-giving principle serves to impart a firm integrity to the flesh (and the muscles), *Sarv Cheshta Aprtighata* exercises unbounded control over all acts of vitality, *Savar Varn Prsado* improves the voice and complexion, and (helps both the external (operative) and the internal (intellectual) sense organs, in duly performing their natural functions.<sup>[2]</sup> *Sleshma* in normal state considered as *Bala* and *Oja* while in abnormal state it is *Mala* (waste) and *Papma* (diseases). Function of normal *Kapha* is like that of *Ojas*. *Kapha* in normal state provides compactness, stability, heaviness, virility, immunity, resistance, courage and gracelessness.

***Sahaja Bala* (innate immunity)**

Constitutional strength which exists in the mind and body from birth.

***Kalaja Bala* (acquired immunity)**

Time-based strength is the one which is based on division of seasons and age of the person. In *Adana kala* (late winter, spring and summers) *Bala* of individual gradually decreases and in *Visarga kala* (rainy seasons, autumn and winter) it gradually increases. *Bala* will be *Alpa* (minimum) in child and old age, *Uttama* (maximum) in young age.

***Yuktikrutaja Bala* (Artificial immunity)**

Acquired strength which is achieved by the combination of diet and physical activities.

**FORMATION OF OJAS-** *Ojas* is the essence of *Shukra* and *Artava* which is called as *Garbha rasa*. *Garbha rasa* nourishes the embryo. When cardiogenesis occurs in the foetus, the *ojas* which is nourishing the *Garbha* enters the heart and then the cardiac activity begins.<sup>[3]</sup> As bees collect essence of fruits and flowers for formation of honey, that way the essence of all *Dhatu*s comprises *Ojas*.<sup>[4]</sup>

**NOURISHMENT OF OJAS-**

After digestion of food, *Prasada* (essence) and the *Kitta* (waste) portion is formed. The *Prasada Bhaag* provides nutrition to *Ojas* along with all the *Dhatu*s.<sup>[5]</sup>

**TYPES**

According to Acharya Chakrpani the *Ojas* is of two<sup>[6]</sup> types- *Para Ojas* and *Aparajas*.

**Para ojas**

Dwelling place of *Para ojas* is Heart. It is the principle *ojas*. Its volume is eight drops. *Para ojas* helps to maintain life, thus when, there is loss or partial loss of *Para ojas* it would lead to death of person.

**Apara ojas**

*Apara ojas* circulates all over the body and its volume is half *Anjali*. This *Ojas* if decreased or vitiated manifest abnormalities. Ten great blood vessels connected to heart carry the *ojas* and pulsate all over the body.<sup>[7]</sup> *Apara ojas* confer the body with two kind of strength i.e. Physical strength and strength to resist disease.

**TWO DWELLING PLACES OF OJAS**

Primary location of *Ojas* is the heart, from where it circulates in the entire body. There are two main places where the *Ojas* prevails,

1. *Para Ojas - Hridaya Sthana* (heart)
2. *Apara Ojas- Sarva Sharir Vyapi* (all over the body).<sup>[8]</sup>

Acharya Bhel has described the twelve sites of *Ojas* in the body i.e. *Rasa, Majja, Asthi, Meda, Mamsa, Shonit, Purish, Mutra, Shleshma, Pitta, Swed, Shukla*.<sup>[9]</sup>

*Hemadri* commentary on *Ashtang Haridya Sutra Sthan Doshbhedhiya Adhaya* classified four types of *ojas*:

1. **Rasatmakaa ojas**: It circulates all over body along with *Rasa Dhatu*.
2. **Dhatutejorupi Ojas**: It is present in all *dhatu* (like tissue-macrophages, mast cells, and the WBC'S).
3. **Sukra Mala Rupi Ojas**: It provides protection to the foetus during intrauterine life (like immunoglobulin which cross the placental barrier).
4. **Jivasonita Rupi Ojas**: which specific for blood cells. If it gets malformed then it will results into hypersensitive reaction.<sup>[10]</sup>

**Cardinal Sign of Ojas as per their location**

1. **Hridiyasth Ojas**: *Ojas* which resides in the heart is predominantly *Raktamishatspitkam* (yellowish reddish in colour).
2. **Garbhsthaj ojas: sarpi varnam** (Appearance of *ojas* is like *ghee*), *Madhu rasam* (taste is like *honey*), *Lajja gandhi* (smell is like *laja*).<sup>[11]</sup>

**OPINIONS ABOUT OJAS BY DIFFERENT ACHARYAS-**

*Astang Sangrah- Sara of Sukra dhatu*

*Astang Hridaya- Mala of Sukra*

*Sarangdhar samhita, Bhel samhita, Bhav Prakash- Updhatu of Sukra.*

*Dalhan- Sneha of Sukra*

**Some controversies related to ojas****Ojas - updhatu or mala of shuker?**

*Ojas* is not an *updhatu* since its function is better than all *dhatu*s, if *ojas* is somehow consider an *updhatu* of *shuker*, then its function would not have been better than that of *shukr*, but it's not so.

According to *acharyas* the quantity of a *dhatu* and its *mala* cannot be the same, but the quantity of both the *shuker* and *ojas* is  $\frac{1}{2}$  *anjali* therefore *ojas* cannot be a *mala* of *shukra*.

**TEN QUALITIES OF OJAS**

*Guru* (Heavy), *Sheet* (cold), *Mridu* (soft), *Shlakshan* (smoothness), *Bahalam*, *Madhur* (sweet), *Sthiram* (stable), *Prsanam* (fresh), *Pichilam* (slimy) and *Sanigdha* (unctuousness) are the qualities of *ojas*.<sup>[12]</sup>

*Ojas* is of *Somatakam* (watery nature), *Sanigdham* (unctuous), *Shukla* (pure white), *Sheet* (cold), *Sthir* (stable), *Saram* (fluidity) *Viviktam* (optimum), *Mridu* (soft), *Mritsanam* (delicate), and *Pranaayatanam uttamam* (the excellent seat of life forces).<sup>[13]</sup>

**FUNCTIONS OF OJAS-**

*Balen Sthir Upchit Mansta* - Enhances the stability and growth of muscle.

*Sarvcheshta svaprtighata* - Ability to perform all activities without any hindrance.

*Savar Varn Prsado* -Clarity of voice and brightness of colour.

*Bhayanam Abhyantranam Karnaam Karya Prtipati*- Normal functioning of the external (motor) and internal (sensory) organs.<sup>[14]</sup>

**Causes of Oaj kshaya**

*Abhighata* (injury), *Kshyata* ( persistent wasting disease), *Kopad* (anger), *Shokad* (grief), *Dhyan* (constant thinking), *Kshrma* (fatigue), *Kshudha* (hunger),<sup>[15]</sup> *Vyayam* (Excessive exercise), *Anashan* (fasting), *Chinta* (anxiety), *Ruksha alapaprimitaashan* (dry, small quantity and measured diet), *Vata, aatpa* (direct exposure to wind and the sun), *Bhyam* (fear), *Shok* (grief), *Rukshpannam* (ununctuous drinks), *Prjagar* (waking up in the night), *Kapha Shonit Sukra Salanam Atiparvarnam* (excessive discharge of kapha, blood, semen and other waste materials), *kaal* (time-factor related to old age or *aadaan kaal*) and *Bhutupghata* (injury by organisms)<sup>[16]</sup>-these are causes of diminution of *ojas*.

**SYMPTOMS OF OJOKSHAYA**

When *ojokshaya* occurs it produces symptoms like *Bibheti* (fear), *Durbalo Abhikshan* (constant weakness), *Dhyayeti* (worry), *Vyathitendriya* (affliction of sense organ with pain), *Dush chhaya* (loss of complexion), *Durmana* (poor mental ability), *Ruksha* (dryness), *Ksham* (emaciation).<sup>[17]</sup>

Commentator *Dalhan* on *Sushruta Sutra* 15/24 has explained *Abhighat* (injury) and *Kshaya* (persistent

wasting disease) are the causes for *ojovishramsa* and symptoms are *Sndhi Vishlesh* (dislocation of joints), *Gatranam Sadanam* (Inertness of extremities), and *Dosh Chayvan* (displacement of *doshas* from their respective locations) *kriya Sannirodh* (impairments in function of body).

When vitiated *doshas* mix with *dushya*, it causes *vyapat* of *ojas* and symptoms of *ojovyapat* are *Stabdha guru Gatrata* (stiffness and heaviness of extremities), *Vaatshofo* (Oedema due to *vata*), *Varn bhedo* (Discolouration of skin or change in complexion), *Glani* (Fatigue of sense), *Tandra* (Drowsiness), *Nidra* (Excess sleep).

*Shok* (sorrow) *Dhyan* (constant thinking) and *kshya* are the cause for *ojokshaya* (below its normal volume) symptoms of *Ojokshaya* are *Murcha* (loss of consciousness), *Mans kshaya* (wasting of muscle), *Moha* (stupor), *Parlapo* (delirium), *Marnam* (death).<sup>[18]</sup>

### PROGNOSIS RELATED TO OJAS

Even partial destruction of *Para ojas* is lethal.<sup>[19]</sup> Abnormalities of *Apara ojas* causes several kind of diseases as explained under *Ojovisramsa*, *Ojovyapata* and *Ojahkshaya*.

#### Ojas vridhi lakshan

*Tushti pushti bal udaya*: Increase *Ojas* is responsible for *Tushti* (gratification), *pushti* (nourishment) and *bal udaya* (promotes strength).<sup>[20]</sup>

#### Factors Influencing Immunity

There are several factors which effects immunity like: *Desh jnam* (Birth place), *kala* (time of birth), *Sukha Kalayoga* (favourable weather), *Beej –Kshetra Gunna sampan* (excellence of genetic qualities), *Aahara Sampat* (excellence of properties of food being consumed), *Sharir sampat* (excellence of physique), *satmaya sampat* (good ability to tolerate various factors), *satva sampat* (excellence of mental status), *swabhaava sansidhi* (favourable factors related to nature), *youvanam* (youthfulness), *karm* (exercise) and *samharsha* (cheerful attitude).<sup>[21]</sup>

#### Management of ojas kshya

*Ojas* play a significant role in the maintenance of healthy life. Particularly if *Apar ojas* is vitiated it may causes diseases like *Pandu* (Anemia), *Madhumeha* (Diabetes) and *Rajyakshma* (Tuberculosis). So proper volume of *ojas* should be maintained by using *Aahar* similar to the qualities of *Ojas* like milk and *Ghee* etc. on the principle of *Sarvada sarva Bhaavaanaam saamanyam vridhhi karanam*.<sup>[22]</sup> Drugs explained under *Rasayan chikitsa* (rejuvenating treatment) and *vaajikarn chikitsa* (aphrodisiac treatment) should be prescribed to patients suffering from symptoms of *ojao kshaya*. In addition to this drugs explained under *Jeevania mahakashaya*, *hridaya dravya*<sup>[23]</sup> with milk as vehicle should be prescribed and also advice to adopt happily life style.

Uses of *Snehapan*, *Abhyanga*, *Pradeh*, *Parishek*, *Snigdha* and *Laghu anna* helps in the management of *ojas kshaya*.

### DISCUSSION

*Ojas* is the *Bala* of body and responsible for *Vyadhikshamatva*. *Ojas* is the cause and *bala* is its effect. *Ojas* is an important element when it is vitiated, it develops many pathological conditions like: The *Samprapti* of *Pandu* is dominated by *pitta*, the other aggravated *Doshas* vitiates the *dhatu*s, which in turn lose their integrity and cause the loss of *Varna, bala*, *Sneha* and *Ojas*.<sup>[24]</sup> *Rajyakshma* occur due to blockade of Channels and weak digestive power. A person suffering with *Rajyakshma* is having weak digestive power. Consumed food is mostly converted into *mala* and little is utilised for *ojas* synthesis.<sup>[25]</sup> This *mala* provides *bala* to the patients of *Rajyakshma* '*Balam hi Tasya vidbalam*'. When *vayu* brings *ojas* from its place to *mutrasaya* it develops a condition known as *Madhumeha*.<sup>[26]</sup> A kind of *Ojas* works at the level of *rasa dhatu* called *Rasatmakaa ojas*, another kind of *ojas* work at *dhatu* level is called *Dhatutejorupi ojas*, other kind of *ojas* which provides protection to the foetus during intrauterine life is called *Sukra mala rupi ojas*, another kind of *ojas* which is specific for blood cells. If it gets malformed then it will results into hypersensitive reaction called *Jivasonita rupi ojas*. Another Important fact about unstable *ojas*, during eighth month of pregnancy, exchange of this unstable *ojas* occurs between mother to foetus and vice versa. If delivery occurs during eight month of pregnancy without *ojas*, baby will be prone to develop the infectious disease or even death of baby may occur.<sup>[27]</sup> In many disease conditions like HIV infection, diabetes mellitus, and malnutrition, where *vyadhikshamatva* decreases due to the loss of *ojas*. In such conditions people are found to be more susceptible to various other degenerative diseases or recurrent infections. As a general rule, those who pander in an irregular routine, are deprived of sleep and exercise, and eat unwholesome food incline to suffer ill health. On the other hand, those who maintain a regular, healthy routine and take wholesome food generally maintain their health. Still, it can be perceived that some persons can overcome disease even after unwholesome food and irregular routine. It can also be noted that though some persons follow a systematic routine and eat wholesome food, they are still vulnerable to disease. These interpretations are due to added factors which end in the maintenance or obliteration of *ojas*, respectively. So for the hindrance of disease ones should maintain *Ojas*.

### CONCLUSION

In *Ayurvedic* literature the word like *bala*, *prakrit kapha* are used as synonyms of *Ojas*. The *Ojas* is the essence of all *dhatu*s, which is responsible for the biological strength, vitality and immunity in the body. Our physical, mental and spiritual strength is dependent on *ojas*. *Ojas* remains present throughout the whole body. Diminution

in its natural quantity leads to the gradual emaciation of organism and more susceptible to infectious agent. So to remain healthy ones should follow ojovardhaka aahara and vihar as it protect us from many diseases and also maintain our health. *Vyadhikshamatva* depends upon *prakrit dosha*, *sam dhatu*, *sam agni* (standard digested power), or the equilibrium state of all other physiological parameters. *Ojas* is final and excellence product of the *Dhatu* and *Vyadhikshamatva* depends on it. Production of excellence of *Dhatu* depends on the *Hita* and *Ahita Ahara* and *Agni*. *Rasayana* remedy helps to yield excellence *Dhatu* and nourishes *Ojas*. Increase in *Oja* increases immunity (*Bala*). Many researches proved immunomodulatory effect of drugs which are used in *Rasayana* therapy. *Lehana* will be also co-operative in the improve immunity. Hence, for achieving good *ojas* (*Vyadhikshamatva-bala,immunity*), we should use several regimens and follow conducts as discussed.

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