

ओजो हि शरीरबलस्य मूलतत्त्वम्।

Introduction to *Oja*: What is understood as *Oja* in the body?

Ayurveda is application-based science and several entities and principles mentioned in Ayurveda may not necessarily be anatomical or structural but may involve a functional and qualitative status. The characteristics of such entities can be understood through their action and effect on the human body. *Oja* is one such entity that is invisible yet of utmost importance entity in the body and absence of which may hamper the sustenance of life.

ओजः शरीरे सङ्ख्यातं तन्नाशान्ना विनश्यति। च.सू.17

Oja is can be considered as an entity distinct from *Dosha*, *Dushya* and *Mala*. Although *Ashtang Hridaya* addresses *Oja* as *Mala* of *Shukra*, it can be considered as ultimate product of metabolism. *Shukra* itself being the nectar of all the *Dhatu*, its resultant *Oja* though being stated as *Mala* is purest outcome of metabolism.

ते च दोषाः समा अप्योजसा विहिनं देहं संवाहयितुमशक्ताः अत ओजसः स्वरूपं पालनं

चोच्यते। अ.सं.सू.19/27

Oja therefore along with the *Dosha*, *Dhatu* and *Mala* is the *Moolatattva* (fundamental principle) of individual responsible for sustenance of life and proper functioning of the body (*Deha Sthiti Nibandhana*).

दशैवायतनान्याहुः प्राणा येषु प्रतिष्ठिताः।

शङ्खौ मर्मत्रयं कण्ठो रक्तं शुक्रौजसी गुदम्॥ च. सू. 29/3-4

Being one amongst the ten *Pranyatana* or ultimate seat of *Prana* (vitality) *Oja* naturally and inherently depicts the status of *Bala* in individual.

Etymological derivation of the term *Oja*

Ojas is mentioned as bodily strength, vigour, energy, ability, power and vitality in the Monier Williams Sanskrit English dictionary.¹ All these terms coincide the concept of *Oja* as *Balatattva* of the body.

ओजो क्त बले तेजसि । शब्दकल्पद्रुम

Shabdakalpadruma also mentions Oja to be synonymous with the “Bala” or “Teja” concept highlighting its role in rendering strength, vigour as well ability to perform any task.

बलं ओजः । सर्वांगसुंदरा टीका- अरुणदत्त

Sarvangasundara commentary by *Arundatta* also mentions *Oja* as synonym of *Bala* while mentioning the concept of *Ojo-Vridhhi*.

ओजः सोमात्मकं रसादिशुक्रान्तसर्वधातुधामभूतं हृदिस्थम्। अन्ये तु बलं शरीरोपचयोऽत्राभिप्रेत इति वदन्ति। एवं परमार्थतो बलौजसोर्भेदेऽपि दोषधातुमलक्षयवृद्धिविज्ञानीये चिकित्सैक्यार्थमभेद ।

सु.सू.1/28- डल्हण टीका

Acharya Dalhana mentions Oja not only as an extract of seven *Dhatu* but also a synonym of *Bala* and *Upachaya*. The clinical application-based differentiation between *Oja* and *Bala* concept are discussed in the *Dosha- Dhatu-Vridhhi-Kshaya Vigyaniya Adhyaya* by *Sushruta* as well.



Oja is referred in term of different terminologies across the text including *Shareera Sneha* (unctuous and purest derivation of *Dhatu* metabolism), *Aahara Prasad* (*Rasa Prasad*, nectar of *Aahara Rasa* or *Aaadya Dhatu* or the preliminary product of metabolism), *Dhatu Saara* (excellent nectar of all the *Dhatu*), *Dhatu Prasada*, *Jeevashonita Saara* (elixir of circulating blood), *Pranayatana* (seat of *Prana* or vitality in the body), derivative of *Kapha Dosha*, *Upadhatu* (as per chakrapani few consider *Oja* to be *Upadhatu* and not *Dhatu* as it performs the function of *Dhatu Dharana* and not necessarily *Dhatu Poshan* or the nourishment of *Dhatu*)

ओजः हृदयस्थं सर्वधातुसाररूपं। च. चि. 15/3-4 चक्रपाणि टीका

Oja being *Sapta Dhatu Saara* imbibes the qualities of all the seven *Dhatu* representative of healthy functional status of the body. It is representative of cumulative *Dhatu Bala* of the individual.

रक्तमयमष्टबिन्दुकमोजो नाम जीवानां ग्रहणधारणविवेककार्यकरं वक्ष्यते।

इन्दु टीका- अ.सं.सू.1/27

Presence of *Para Oja* is of utmost importance for sustenance of life and lack of which may result in death of the individual. *Ashtang Sangraha* mentions it as derivative of *Rakta Dhatu* resembling the status of *Jeevana* or life which is responsible for functions of *Dhatu* namely *Grahana* (nourishment or nutrition), *Dharana* (sustenance and proper function), *Viveka* (differentiation of tissues, components of nourishments and metabolism) etc. Thus, *Para Oja* is *Parama Bala* that is necessary for existence and forms the connection of *Ayu* for the individual while *Apara Oja* is representative of aspect of *Oja* necessary to carry out the day-to-day activities of the individual. Therefore, the *Oja Kshaya* or lack of *Para Oja* will lead to the death of the individual while vitiation or more precisely the depletion of *Apara Oja* will culminate into occurrence of *Daurbalya* in the individual. It will be reflective of the *Kshaya* or depletion of the *Kapha Dosha* and ultimately the *Bala* factor related to *Kapha Dosha*.

Oja and Shareera Bala

प्राकृतस्तु बलं श्लेष्मा विकृतो मल उच्यते।

स चैवौजः स्मृतः काये स च पाप्मोपदिश्यते॥ च.सू.17/117

बलमिति बलहेतुत्वेन। च.सू. 17/117- चक्रपाणि टीका

As mentioned earlier, this entity known as *Oja* is also mentioned in context of “*Bala*” across various instances in texts. *Acharya Charaka* terms it as *Prakrita Kapha* (unvitiated *Kapha Dosh*) synonymous with *Bala*. Thus, it can be stated that *Oja* shares close relationship with *Kapha Dosh* both of which are determinant of strength and vitality in the body.

तत्र रसादीनां शुक्रान्तानां धातूनां यत् परं तेजस्तत् खल्वोजस्तदेव बलमित्युच्यते, स्वशास्त्रसि
द्धान्तात् ॥ सु.सू.15/19

Sushruta Samhita directly states the *Oja* as *Bala* and the pathologies deriving from the same as *Bala- Vyapat*, *Bala Vistransa* and *Bala Kshaya*. *Acharya Dalhana* clarifies that *Bala* and *Oja* are considered to be distinct from only from *Chikitsa* or treatment point of view and broadly speaking the *Bala* should be considered as derivative (*Bheda*) of *Oja* in the human body.

सर्वधातुस्नेहभूतस्योपचयलक्षणस्यौजसो रूपरसौ वीर्यादि च विद्यते, बलस्य तु भारहरणादिश
क्तिगम्यस्य रसवीर्यवर्णादिगुणा न विद्यन्ते, अतोऽनयोर्भेदोऽस्त्येवेति । डल्हण टीका-

सु.सू.15/19

Thus, for the purpose of *Chikitsa* related to *Bala*, treatment of *Oja* should be considered as representative of *Bala Chikitsa* in the body.

बलचिकित्सार्थं स्वचिकित्सार्थमपि ओजस्य प्राकृत गुणादिनाम् निर्देशः स्यात् । डल्हण टीका

सु.सू.15/21-22

Thus, when the aspect of *Bala* is in consideration, *Oja* is termed as *Bala* as it is representative of the qualitative and quantitative aspects related to the overall construct of the *Bala*. Here *Oja* materially represents *Bala* and *Bala* is subsequently the outcome of the proper functioning of the *Oja* in the body.

बलं शक्त्युपचयलक्षणम्| डल्हण - सु.सू. 15/28

Bala is the *Shakti* as in *Samarthya* or work efficiency and *Upachaya* (proper nourishment) which are resultant proper *Oja* function in the individual. Thus, it can be stated that the *Oja* is the “मूर्त भाव” also representing the “अमूर्त बल” in the individual. Thus both the entities, *Bala* and *Oja* may differ conceptually but considering the applications and therapeutic approach, these are similar and coherent.

Bala is the quality or physiological function expressed through physical activity while *Oja* possesses its own *Rasa* (tastes), *Virya* (potency), *Vipaka* (ultimate metabolite) and can be assessed physically has its distinct color and odour as well. It has well defined *Guna* (attributes) and *Karma* (functions or mode of action)

ओजस्तेजोऽग्नयः प्राणाश्चोक्ता देहाग्निहेतुकाः|| च.चि.15

विविधमशितं पीतं लीढं खादितंकेवलं

शरीरमुपचयबलवर्णसुखायुषा.....पुष्यन्ति त्वाहाररसाद्रसरुधिरमांसमेदोस्थिमज्जशुक्रौजांसि ।

च. सू. 28/4

प्राणिनां पुनर्मूलमाहारो बलवर्णोजसां च। सु.सू. 1/28

Agni and *Aahara* both lead to *Bala* and are nourishers as well as the determinants of *Oja* in the body as well. *Dalhana* also states *Agni* amongst the synonym of *Oja*.

ग्राम्याहारादम्ललवणकटु.....क्षयमुपैत्योजः| च.चि.1/2/3

Gramya Aahara is most frequently associated with *Oja Kshaya* resulting in *Glani* (fatigue), *Daurbalya* (weakness) like symptoms.

गत्वं दशगुणं पयः||

तदेवङ्गुणमेवौजः सामान्यादभिवर्धयेत्| च. सू. 27/217

The ten *Guna* of *Oja* (namely *Guru*, *Snigdha*, *Sheeta* etc.) are similar to that of the *Kapha Dosh* and ultimately nourish the *Bala* of individual as well. The *Ksheera Guna* similar to *Guna* of *Oja* and *Ksheera* or milk is itself is termed as *Ojasya* due to its inherent characteristics

as mentioned in *Ashtang Hridaya*.² Consumption of *Ghrita* or Ghee is also stated to have positive effect on overall *Bala* and physiological status of *Oja* in the human body. *Ghrita* is stated as “घृतं पित्तानिलहरं रसशुक्रौजसां हितम्” and considered to be ideal for individuals who want to elevate the *Oja* (ओजस्यं). *Ghrita* is consecutively also considered to promote the *Bala* and overall, wellbeing of individual as well. Amongst the six *Rasa* or six types of tastes the *Madhura Rasa* or sweet taste in general is considered to have beneficial effect on *Oja* and considered to have positive impact on the *Bala* status as well.

शरीरबलसन्धानं स्नानमोजस्करं परम्। च.सू.5/94

Snana or proper cleansing of body is thus considered to be *Shareera Bala Sandhana* meaning an entity which facilitates and communicates the aspect of *Shareera Bala* with that of the *Oja*.

बिभेति दुर्बलोऽभीक्षणं ध्यायति.....। च.सू. 17/73

Durbalata is mentioned among the important signs of *Oja Kshaya* highlighting the role of *Oja* in maintaining the *Bala* status in the body.

ओजोवृद्धौ हि देहस्य तुष्टिपुष्टिबलोदयः। अ.ह.सू.11

Vridhhi of *Oja* results in increase or *Udaya* of *Bala* in the body. This *Bala* is present in form of *Shakti Utkarsha* or vitality contributing to overall wellbeing of the individual. Thus, both *Vridhhi* and *Kshaya* of *Oja* both include an aspect of *Bala*.

Oja and Manas Bala

सत्त्वस्य च ओज आश्रयः, ओज उपकार्यम्; यथा- राजाश्रितः पुरुषः। चक्रपाणि - च.चि. 24

Sattva and *Oja* belong to the same *Sthana* or the place in the body i.e. *Hridaya* or heart. There is mention of *Oja Vikruti* in condition like *Madatyaya* which leads to pathology related to *Manas*. *Sattva* or mind is stated to be in contact with *Oja* and possess similar functions hence the pathology of these entities occurs in unison in conditions like *Madatyaya*. Here the *Sattva Bala* vis a vis overall function of *Manas* is disturbed due to consumption of *Madya* whose qualities are antagonistic to that of *Oja*.

मनस्करं इति प्रभावात् ओजस्करं।

ओजोवृद्ध्या हि तदनुविधायिनो मनसोऽपि स्वकर्मसामर्थ्यं भवति। च. सू.1/112 चक्रपाणि टीका

While mentioning the qualities of milk, *Acharya Chakrapani* states that term *Manaskara* can be correlated with *Ojaskara* and all the products or activities that facilitate the *Mana* (mind) also nourish and develop *Oja* in individuals. Thus *Oja* as functions at the mental level to facilitate the *Bala* at level of mind helping in prevention of mental conditions and related emotional disturbances.

Oja and Shareera Bala: Through the lens of Pathological events

ज्वरो रोगपतिः पाप्मा मृत्युरोजोशनोऽन्तकः। वा.नि.2/1

सर्वधात्वाप्यायकं यदोजस्तदशनं भोजनं यस्येत्योजोशनः। अरुणदत्त टीका वा.नि. 2/1

In conditions like chronic pyrexia or *Jeerna Jwara* there is prominent *Deha Dhatu Daurbalya* or malfunctioning of body tissues resulting in extreme *Kshaya* or depletion of *Oja*. Otherwise as well the *Jwara* is often associated with *Oja Kshaya* and *Oja* resulted pathologies and it is stated that the *Jwara* itself eats up the *Oja* which is the nourisher of all the *Dhatu* in the body.

ओजः पुनर्मधुरस्वभावं, तद् यदा रौक्ष्याद्वायुः कषायत्वेनाभिसंसृज्य मूत्राशयेऽभिवहति तदा मधु
मेहं करोति | च. नि. 4/37

In *Ojo Meha* also known as *Madhu Meha* reflects the most severe form of pathology related to *Prameha* resulting in chronic depletion and excretion of *Oja* through *Mutra* or urine resulting in overall weakness of individual. It also results in excessive vitiation of *Vaata Dosha*.

तस्मिन् काले पचत्यग्निर्यदन्नं कोष्ठसंश्रितम्। मलीभवति तत् प्रायः कल्पते किञ्चिदोजसे।

च.चि. 8

ओजसे इति सारभागाय, रसायेति यावत् | चक्रपाणि टीका

While describing *Rajayakshma*, the *Dhatu* related metabolism is extremely disturbed leading to extreme loss of strength and malnourishment of the *Dhatu*.

ततो वर्णबलस्नेहा ये चान्येऽप्योजसो गुणाः। व्रजन्ति क्षयमत्यर्थ.....च.चि.16/6

In conditions like *Pandu*, *Durbalata* is main event, *Oja Kshaya* is existent. *Dhatu Saarata* is significantly reduced ultimately resulting in the depletion of *Oja*.

उदानं उच्यते बलं। च.चि.28

Udana Vayu is seat of *Bala* in the body. The *Vakpravritti* (ability of speech), *Prayatna* (ability to perform different activities), *Bala* (strength) are all dependant on the functioning of *Udana Vayu*.

कर्माजोबलवर्णानां नाशो मृत्युरथापि वा| उदानेनावृते प्राणे । च.चि.28/208

While mentioning the *Avarana Prakarana* in *Vaatavyadhi Adhyaya*, *Udana Avrita Prana Vayu* also features *Ojakshaya* and *Balakshaya* associating the function of *Udana Vayu* in coherence with *Vata Dosha* and overall strength of individual.

ओजोभ्रंशश्च सादश्चाप्युदाने पित्तसंवृते| च.चि. 28/224

Pittavrita Udana features *Ojabhransa* as one of the symptoms. This underlines the connection of *Oja* and *Udana Vayu* contributing to the enhanced status of *Bala* in the body.

मूर्च्छा तन्द्रा प्रलापोऽङ्गसादोऽग्न्योजोबलक्षयः| समानेनावृते व्याने.....| च.चि.28/213

Similarly, the *Samana Avrita Vyana Vayu* also features *Oja Kshaya* along with *Bala Kshaya* as important sign. This might indicate the severe depletion of function of *Oja* resulting in the fatal condition.

तस्योपघातान्मूर्च्छायं भेदान्मरणमृच्छति| च.सू. 30/6

(तस्य इति हृदयस्य यत् परस्यौजसः स्थानं तस्य)

Oja is carried through the *Dasha Dhamani* or ten channels situated in the *Hridaya*. Thus, any injury or pathology in *Hridaya* may result in vitiation or imbalance of *Oja*.

तत्र हृदयभिहते कासश्वासबलक्षय | च. सि. 9/6

Considering the above resemblances, the *Balakshaya* is therefore mentioned as one of the symptoms of *Hridayamarma Abhighata* as mentioned in the *Siddhithana* of *Charak Samhita*.

अष्टमे मासि गर्भश्च मातृतो गर्भतश्च माता रसहारिणीभिः

संवाहिनीभिर्मुहुर्मुहुरोजः परस्परत आददाते गर्भस्यासम्पूर्णत्वात् | च.शा.8/24

The 8th month of prenatal period describes the condition of *Asthira Oja* (unstable state of *Oja*) between Mother and the child. Lack of *Oja* may result in harm to the *Garbha*. The mother may also suffer in this case. Thus, this also underlines the importance of *Oja* in maintaining the live status of fetus during the period of pregnancy. Here the *Oja* can be considered as the *Para Oja* in form of *Jeeva Shonita* conceived at the time of birth (inherited aspect) of the individual sustaining the life and functioning of the individual.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that the *Bala* and *Oja* are conceptually distinct entities, these are coherently and clinically similar through the lens of clinical application. *Oja* will determine the *Bala* of individual and aspect of *Oja* should be considered in any pathology related to the *Bala* of the individual. Although many Ayurveda professionals correlate *Oja* with *Vyadhikshamatva* (immunity), it should be noted that *Vyadhikshamatva* is amongst the outcomes of the *Oja* and not the only determining factor. Thus therapeutically, *Oja* can be considered as *Mulatattva* (basic principle) for assessment of *Shareer Bala* of the individual

References

¹Available from: <https://www.sanskrit-lexicon.uni-koeln.de/scans/csl-apidev/servepdf.php?dict=MW&page=235> [Last accessed on 17th March 2026]

² Ashtang Hridaya , Sutrasthana Adhyaya 5, Verse No. 20, Page No. 68