

## PRANA, TEJAS AND OJAS by David Frawley from Yoga and Ayurveda (Ch 7)

These three subtle energies which are related with the sexual energy and fluids are of great importance for our spiritual transformation.

### Basic expressions of Prana, Tejas and Ojas

- **OJAS, or Primal Vigor** expressed as physical and mental endurance, strength, insulation, immunity, fertility, patience, and equilibrium.
- **TEJAS, or Inner Radiance** expressed as conviction, courage, intellect, creative vision, and a melting tenderness that draws all hearts. It is an internal fire fueled by Ojas.
- **PRANA, or Intuitive Energy** expressed as spontaneous right action, presence, lightness of body, enthusiasm, creative action, and ascension.

Yoga is an alchemical process of balancing and transforming the energies of the psyche. To approach it we must understand how to work with these energies in a practical way. In this chapter we will introduce a deeper level of the doshas that is important relative to yogic practice. Vata, pitta and kapha have subtle counterparts called prana, tejas and ojas, which could be called "the three vital essences." These are the root or master forms of vata, pitta and kapha that control ordinary psychophysical functioning and, if reoriented properly, energize higher spiritual potentials as well. They are not simply forces of the physical body but of the subtle and causal bodies as well.

Prana, tejas and ojas are the essential or beneficial forms of vata, pitta and kapha that sustain positive vitality. Unlike the doshas, which are factors of disease, they promote health, creativity and well-being and provide the support for deeper yogic and meditational practices.

**Prana — primal life-force:** the subtle energy of air as the master force and guiding intelligence behind all psychophysical functions, responsible for coordination of breath, senses and mind. On an inner level, it governs the unfoldment and harmonization of all higher states of consciousness.

**Tejas — inner radiance:** the subtle energy of fire as the radiance of vitality through which we digest air, impressions and thoughts. On an inner level, it governs the unfoldment of all higher perceptual capacities.

**Ojas — primal vigor:** the subtle energy of water as the stored up vital reserve, the basis for physical and mental endurance; the internalized essence of digested food, water, air, impressions and thought. On an inner level, it is responsible for nourishing and grounding the development of all higher faculties.

These three forces are interrelated. Prana and tejas are rooted in ojas and can be regarded as aspects of ojas. Tejas is the heat and light energy of ojas that has an oily quality and, like ghee, can sustain a flame. Prana is the energy and strength that comes from ojas after it has been kindled into tejas. Ojas proper is the potential, the stamina of the mind and nervous system for holding tejas and prana. Ojas has the capacity to turn into tejas (heat), which has the capacity to turn into prana (electricity).

Prana, tejas and ojas resemble the concepts of chi, the Yang and Yin of Chinese medicine. Prana, as the life-force and cosmic breath, is like the primordial chi, which also relates to wind and spirit. Tejas as the power of will and vigor resembles original Yang, which is the primal fire. Ojas, as endurance and stamina, resembles primordial Yin, which is the essence of water.

The main rule of ayurvedic treatment is to prevent any of the doshas from becoming too high because in excess they cause disease. The dosha predominant in our constitution tends toward excess and must be restrained through the appropriate lifestyle regimen. This is achieved through following the right diet, herbs, exercise, and meditation that counter doshic proclivities.

In the practice of yoga a new rule comes into play. The yogi seeks to increase all three forces of prana, tejas and ojas. As these are the purified forms of the doshas, they do not have the same disease-causing power. These three vital essences only cause problems if one is increased at the expense of the others. They are basically wholesome energies that aid in renewal and transformation. The question is how to keep them growing at a similar rate so that their imbalance does not cause problems.

Increased prana is necessary to provide the enthusiasm, creativity and adaptability necessary for the spiritual path, without which we lack the energy and motivation to do our practices.

Increased tejas provides the courage, fearlessness, and insight to take us along the path, without which we make wrong choices and judgments or fail to be decisive in what we do. Increased ojas is necessary for the peace, confidence and patience to keep our development consistent, without which we lack steadiness and calm.

Should any of these factors be insufficient, our spiritual growth will be limited. These same factors increase positive health in both body and mind, and are helpful in treating all diseases, particularly of a chronic nature, including promoting rejuvenation.

## **FUNCTIONS OF PRANA, TEJAS AND OJAS**

To understand these three forces let us examine how they function in the different aspects of our nature.

### **REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM**

**Prana, tejas and ojas are nourished by the reproductive fluid which functions as their support in the physical body.** They are three aspects of the transformed reproductive fluid (shukra). Ojas is the latent state of the reproductive fluid that provides not only reproductive power but strength in general and nourishes all the bodily tissues from within, particularly the nerve tissue. Ojas is our power of endurance and ability to sustain us, not only sexually but through all forms of exertion, physical and mental.

**Tejas is the activated state of the reproductive fluid when it is transformed into heat,**

**passion and will power.** This occurs not only in sexual activity but whenever we are challenged or need to exert ourselves. Tejas gives us valor, courage and daring. In yoga this force is necessary to enable us to perform tapas or transformative spiritual practices.

**Prana is the life-creating capacity inherent in the reproductive fluid.** This aids in longevity and rejuvenation and stimulates the flow of prana through the nadis, giving a deeper energy to the mind. Without the proper reserve of reproductive fluid, we will become deficient in prana, tejas and ojas. Wrong or excessive sexual activity depletes all three forces.

### **IMMUNE SYSTEM**

Prana, tejas and ojas give energy to the immune system. Ojas is the basic capacity of the immune system, our potential to defend ourselves against external pathogens. It provides endurance, resistance and strength to ward off diseases. Tejas is the immune system which is able to burn and destroy toxins when activated. It generates the fever that the body produces to destroy the pathogens which attack it. Tejas is our ability to overcome acute diseases, which are generally infectious in nature. Tejas is ojas converted into heat, warmth and vitality. It is our ability to mobilize our immune systems forces.

Prana is the long-term activation of the immune function to project and develop life-energy which manifests when we are dealing with a chronic disease. It is the adaptability of the immune system and sustains all long-term healing processes. With sufficient prana, tejas and ojas, no disease can approach us. Increasing prana, tejas and ojas helps all low immune conditions.

### **NERVOUS SYSTEM AND NADIS**

The nervous system is the master system governing all bodily systems. The three vital essences are responsible for its proper function. Prana governs the discharge and coordination of nerve impulses, which are pranic and vata forces. When deranged, it causes hypersensitivity, tremors and imbalances in the nervous system. Tejas provides acuity of perception and feeling. Deranged tejas burns out the nervous system, causing inflammation and scarring of the nerve tissue. Ojas gives endurance and stability through the nervous system. It is responsible for the lubrication of the nerve channels. Nervous breakdown or nervous exhaustion occurs through low ojas. Prana, tejas and ojas govern the movement of impulses through the nadis as well. Ojas is the fluid that lines the nadis, cushioning the flow of energy through them. Tejas is the heat moving through them. Prana is the energy moving produced by the heat of tejas. To safeguard the nadis we must protect prana, tejas and ojas.

### **BREATH**

The three vital essences are present in the power of the breath. Prana is the basic energy and movement of the breath. Tejas is the heat produced by the breath. Ojas is the deeper energy that we absorb through the breath and keep as an energy reserve.

When Prana is deranged, the breath is shallow or disturbed. When Tejas is deranged, the heat content of the breath is abnormal. When Ojas is deranged, the absorbed energy of the breath is low or we are unable to hold and consolidate it.

## **SENSES**

Prana allows for the equilibrium and coordination of sensory impulses and is predominant in the ears (including the inner ear) and the skin, the Vata-predominant (ether and air) senses. Tejas is responsible for acuity of sensory function and our ability to digest sensory impressions. It dominates in the eyes, the Pitta or fire-predominant sense. Ojas is responsible for stability of the senses, as well as for their lubrication. It dominates in the tongue and the nose, the Kapha-predominant (water and earth) senses.

## **CREATIVITY**

Prana, Tejas and Ojas are measures of creativity. Ojas is latent creative capacity, our storehouse of creative energy. Tejas is creative vision, the ability to see new things and break with the past. Prana is creative action to bring new things into being and remain in the creative state. Proper Ojas is necessary to give us the proper reserve of creative energy. Proper Tejas serves to direct our creative energy toward specific goals. Proper Prana functions to keep our creativity mobile and transformative.

## **MIND AND CONSCIOUSNESS**

Prana, Tejas and Ojas exist on deeper levels as well.

There is a Pranic force behind the mind that allows it to move and respond and which keeps it in balance. There is a Tejas force behind the mind that allows it to perceive and to determine, to digest impressions, ideas and emotions.

There is an Ojas force behind the mind that gives it patience and endurance, allowing it to resist disturbances.

Similarly, there is a Prana in our deeper consciousness that sustains us through the entire process of rebirth, imparting life to all the different bodies that we incarnate in.

There is a Tejas, the accumulated insight and vitality of our spiritual aspiration. There is an Ojas that is the power through which the SOUL produces all its various bodies. **On the level of the Soul, Prana, Tejas and Ojas are the original life, light and love.**

## **THE PRACTICE OF YOGA AND PRANA, TEJAS AND OJAS**

The inner practice of Yoga is an alchemy of the three vital essences. For this, it is important that we are able to monitor the conditions of Prana, Tejas and Ojas within us. There are signs and symptoms of their excess, deficient or sufficient conditions. These can be understood by their functions relative to the different systems of the body.

Insufficient Ojas is revealed by weak immune function, low sexual vitality, lack of stamina, lack of patience, difficulty sleeping, ungroundedness and anxiety.

Insufficient Tejas is indicated by cold extremities, weak digestion, cloudy perception, indecisiveness and poor judgment.

Insufficient Prana shows us lack of energy and motivation, attachment and unwillingness to change.

## **KUNDALINI -SHAKTI ENERGY**

**Kundalini is the heightened energy of Tejas, which requires the proper Ojas to sustain it and the proper Prana to move it.** Kundalini is the core internal fire that brings about all inner transformations. While much has been said of it in recent years, its related

forces of Ojas and Prana have seldom been explained properly.

Kundalini or Tejas is the higher feminine energy within us that aspires to divinity. It is the Yoga Shakti, the power of Yoga, necessary to catalyze all higher evolutionary potentials within us. While it is the key to yogic alchemy, it must be understood in the context of its related forces.

### **AMRIT/SOMA -SHIVA ENERGY**

Opposite to Kundalini is the Amrit or nectar that descends from the crown chakra and feeds the Kundalini in her upward ascent. This is the purified Ojas energy in the subtle body, which has been extracted and distilled through spiritual practices. Ojas is the higher masculine energy which, through surrender, care and protection, brings about the descent of grace.

### **HIGHEST PRANA**

The union of Tejas (Kundalini) and Ojas (Amrit) creates the highest Prana, which is the immortal life energy. This alone has the power to create the higher samadhis (spiritual absorptions) necessary to dissolve the deep-seated conditionings (samskaras) in our consciousness (Chitta) that cause our attachment to the cycle of birth and death. This immortal Prana is the Divine child who is the child of immortality.