

Life-Wind

Rāsta starts with an ancient Indo-Iranian notion: the equalization of wind and life. In the Indo-Iranian doctrine, life is bound to wind (*vāyu / vāta*). Thus Rāsta says “Wind and life are the same.” If any of the spiritual (/ windy) organs such as sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch leave their place (/ material organs), that is eyes, ears, nose, tongue and hands, the body is weakened, for it cannot see, hear, etc. Thus if the life-wind leaves the body, it is rendered lifeless and dies. Rāsta holds this true for all creatures and plants:

چون بادش از تن جدا شود، همه مرده و خشک... شوند. از این... درست است که باد و جان یکی است.

“When the wind is separated from the body, anything becomes dead and arid. From this it’s shown correct that life and wind are the same.”

The governing spirits of the body, such as the Soul (Av. *urvan*, Pers. *ruvān*), Perception (Av. *baōḍa*, Pers. *bōy*), Pre-soul (Av. *fravaši*, Pers. *fravahr*) are all organs of Breath-soul (/ Life) (Av. *vyāna*, Pers. *gyān*, جان). When the Breath-soul exits the body, these spirits mix with it, and the Breath-soul itself mixes with the natural wind. The Sad dar-i Bundahiš (Ch. 98) says regarding the *baōḍa*, *fravaši*, *urvan*, *ahu* (‘existence’), and *vyāna* so:

چون جان از تن به رود، ایشان هر چهار دیگر ... با او به روند؛ و بی جان در تن نه توانند بودن. و چون بیرون آمدند، جان با باد آمیخته شود، و اخو با مینوان روانه بهشت شود ... و روان و بوی و فروهر هر سه با هم بیامیزند ... و شمار بر ایشان است. ... جان چون بادی و بخاری است لطیف که از دل خیزد. و چون جملت از تن بیرون آید، جان با باد گومیخته، و تن با خاک گومیخته شود.^۲

“When *vyāna* exists the body, the other four go with it; and they cannot stay in the body without the *vyāna*. As they exit, the *vyāna* mixes with the wind, and the *ahu* goes to Heaven... the *urvan*, *baōḍa* and *fravaši* mix with each other... and they are the ones held accountable. ... *vyāna* is like a delicate wind or fume that arises from the heart. When they all exit the body, *vyāna* mixes with the wind, and the body mixes with the earth.”

¹ Cf. ŠGV, IV.88-91

² Dhabhar (1909), *Saddar Naṣr and Saddar Bundelesh*, pp. 167

Thus the vyāna is a spiritual faculty arisen from the material world, of same essence with the natural wind, and goes back to it after death. The word *vyāna*- ‘life, wind of life, breath-soul’, although descending from PIr. *vyāna*-³, comes in place of Av. *uštāna* ‘vital soul’. *uštāna* ‘vital-soul’ and *ast* ‘skeleton’ are bound together⁴ like the *vyāna* ‘breath-soul’ and *tanu* ‘body’. Part of the material world is corporeal and tangible (*astvā*) and part of it is living and alive (*uštānavā*)⁵. The living corporeal being is called by the Avesta *astvañt- uštāna-* or *uštānavañt*-⁶; And the lifeless corporeal being is called *uzuštāna*-⁷. Versus this corporeal existence is the spiritual, immaterial existence, *manahī ahūm*.⁸ Zaratuštra (Y. 28.2) says:

ahvā astvatasca hyaṭcā manahō āyaptā

Z: ped harv dō oxān ī astōmandān ud kē-z mēnōgān [nēkīh ī ēdar, hān-z ī ānōh].

“the blessings of both worlds, the corporeal and the spiritual”

Where the Vištāsp Yašt speaks of ‘this world’ and ‘the spiritual world’, the Avesta Glossary (*frahang ī oim-ēk*) puts ‘body’ and ‘urvan’:

Death is the separation of the body from *vyāna* (/ *uštāna*) and *baoda* (and *urvan*).

Vīdēvdād 19.7:

nōiṭ astaca nōiṭ uštānəmca nōiṭ baodasca vīurvīsyāṭ

‘May it not be that my body (lit. skeleton) and *uštāna* and *baoda* separate.’

After this separation, *tanu* and *vyāna* return to nature, while *baoda* and *ruvān* are freed. *ruvān* is liberated from corporeal existence, and *tanu* from spiritual existence. *vyāna* is the chamber that spiritual and material, intangible and tangible are joined together. One is alive and actions are in its own command: speech, hearing and etc. are not separate, or different, from it; they are all wind.

³ Humbach (1991), *The Gāthās of Zarathushtra*, pp. 39 identified two words: *vyāna*- (nt.) ‘life, soul, ghost, spirit’; *vyānayā*- (f.) ‘desire for life’.

⁴ Cf. Y. 37.3: *ahmākāiš azdōbīš uštānāišcā* ‘with our bodies (lit. skeletons) and our lives.’

⁵ Cf. Yt. 13.129: *astvā hā uštānavā*

⁶ Cf. Y. 34.14

⁷ Cf. Pūrs. 59

⁸ Cf. Y. 53.6: *manahīm ahūm mərəṇduyē* ‘you ruin [your] spiritual existence.’

⁹ Vyt. 32: *ahēca aṇhōuš darəṅāi haosravaṇhāi manahyeheca aṇhōuš darəṅāi havaṇhāi* ‘long fame in this world, and long prosperity of the spiritual world.’

¹ *Frahang*, 3h: *tanvācā haosrāvāṇhəm urunācā darəṅəm havaṇhəm*. ‘long fame of the body, and long prosperity of the urvan’ Cf. Vn. 18-21: *tanvaca husravaṇhəm uraonaeca darəṅəm ×havaṇhəm*. Cf. Kellens (1995), *Y a-t-il une âme osseuse?*, pp. 158.

Now we present two texts, one from the Upaniṣad, regarding all senses of the body being wind (Skt. *prāṇa*-); other from the Dēnkird, regarding the winds (Av. *mainyu*-) of humans.

Chāndogya Upaniṣad V.1 (Cf. Bṛhad-Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad, I.3):

1. yo ha vai jyeṣṭhaṃ ca śreṣṭhaṃ ca veda jyeṣṭhaś ca ha vai śreṣṭhaś ca bhavati, prāṇo vāva jyeṣṭhaś ca śreṣṭhaś ca
2. yo ha vai vasiṣṭhaṃ veda vasiṣṭho ha svānāṃ bhavati, vāg vāva vasiṣṭhaḥ
3. yo ha vai pratiṣṭhāṃ veda prati ha tiṣṭhaty asmimś ca loke amuṣmimś ca, cakṣur vāva pratiṣṭhā
4. yo ha vai saṃpadam veda saṃ hāsmāi kāmāḥ padyante daivāś ca mānuṣāś ca, śrotram vāva saṃpat
5. yo ha vā āyatanam veda āyatanam ha svānāṃ bhavati, mano ha vā āyatanam
6. atha ha prāṇā ahaṃśreyasi vyūdire, ahaṃ śreyān asmy ahaṃ śreyān asmīti
7. te ha prāṇāḥ prajāpatiṃ pitaram etyocuh bhagavan ko naḥ śreṣṭha iti, tān hovāca, yasmin va utkrānte śarīram pāpiṣṭhataram iva dṛśyeta sa vaḥ śreṣṭha iti
8. sā ha vāg uccakrāma, sā saṃvatsaram proṣya paryetyovāca, katḥam aśakatarte maj jīvitum iti, yatḥā kalā avadantaḥ prāṇantaḥ prāṇena paśyantaś cakṣuṣā śṛṅvantaḥ śrotreṇa dhyāyanto manasaivam iti. praviveśa ha vāk
9. cakṣur hoccakrāma, tat saṃvatsaram proṣya paryetyovāca, katḥam aśakatarte maj jīvitum iti, yatḥāndḥā apaśyantaḥ prāṇantaḥ prāṇena vadanto vācā śṛṅvantaḥ śrotreṇa dhyāyanto manasaivam iti, praviveśa ha cakṣuḥ
10. śrotram hoccakrāma, tat saṃvatsaram proṣya paryetyovāca katḥam aśakatarte maj jīvitum iti, yatḥā badḥirā aśṛṅvantaḥ prāṇantaḥ prāṇena vadanto vācā paśyantaś cakṣuṣā dhyāyanto manasaivam iti, praviveśa ha śrotram
11. mano hoccakrāma, tat saṃvatsaram proṣya paryetyovāca katḥam aśakata ṛte maj jīvitum iti, yatḥā bālā amanasaḥ prāṇantaḥ prāṇena vadanto vācā paśyantaś cakṣuṣā śṛṅvantaḥ śrotreṇaivam iti, praviveśa ha manaḥ
12. atha ha prāṇa uccikramiṣan sa yatḥā suhayaḥ paḍvīśaśānkūn saṃkḥided evam itarān prāṇān samakḥidat, taṃ hābhīsametyocuh, bhagavann edḥi, tvam naḥ śreṣṭho 'si, motkramīr iti
13. atha hainaṃ vāg uvāca, yad ahaṃ vasiṣṭho 'smi tvam tadvasiṣṭho 'sīti, atha hainaṃ cakṣur uvāca, yad ahaṃ pratiṣṭhāsmi tvam tatpratiṣṭhāsīti
14. atha hainaṃ śrotram uvāca, yad ahaṃ saṃpad asmi tvam tatsaṃpad asīti, atha

¹ This substitution of mainyu for wind is not surprising. In the human body, the opposition between the life-wind and the bad wind is likened to the opposition of the evil and holy spirits before the material creation. Cf. Shaked (1994), *Dualism in Transformation*, pp. 65.

hainam mana uvāca, yad aham āyatanam asmi tvaṃ tadāyatanam asīti
15. na vai vāco na cakṣuṃṣi na śrotrāṇi na manāṃsīty ācakṣate, prāṇā ity
evācakṣate, prāṇo hy evaitāni sarvāṇi bhavati

Translation:

1. He who knows the elder and the best, himself becomes the oldest and the best. It is Life-Wind (*prāṇa*) which is the oldest and the best.
2. He who knows the prime, himself becomes primer among his own [relatives]. Speech (/ tongue) is prime.
3. He who knows the support, attains a support in this world and the other. The eye is the support.
4. He who knows the completion, becomes successful, humane and godly. Ears are completion.
5. He who knows the abode, becomes the abode of his own [relatives]. Mind is the abode.
6. Once, these senses began to quarrel on who is better, and each would say: “I am better.”
7. Those senses then went to the father, Lord of Creation (*Prajāpati*), and said: “O’ lord, which of us is better?” He told them: “The one is better among you, whom after his leave the body suffers more.”
8. Tongue left (the body); after one year he came back and asked: “How did you live without me?” (They said:) “Like muffled mutes, who inhale and exhale with the Life-Wind, see with the eye, hear with the ear, think with the mind. We did so.” Speech entered (the body.)
9. Eye left. After one year he came back and asked: “How did you live without me?” (They said:) “Like unseeing blinds, who inhale and exhale with the Life-Wind, talk with the speech, hear with the ear, think with the mind. We did so.” Sight entered (the body.)
10. Ear left. After one year he came back and asked: “How did you live without me?” (They said:) “Like unhearing deafs, who inhale and exhale with the Life-Wind, talk with the tongue, see with the eye, think with the mind. We did so.” Ear entered (the body.)
11. Mind left. After one year he came back and asked: “How did you live without me?” (They said:) “Like stupid children, who inhale and exhale with the Life-Wind, talk with the tongue, see with the eye, hear with the ear. We did so.” Mind entered (the body.)
12. As the Life-Wind was about to live, the other organs were torn, like a lively

horse who is able to uproot the pegs that have bound him (with ropes). The senses came to him and said: “O’ Lord, you are better than us, be our leader.”

13. Thus tongue told him: “If I am better, then you are better.” Thus eye told him: “If I am support, then you are support.”

14. Thus ear told him: “If I am completion, then you are completion.” Thus mind told him: “If I am abode, then you are abode.”

15. These (other senses) then did not call themselves tongue or eye or ear or mind, they call themselves *prāṇa*, for they are all *prāṇa*.

Dēnkird iii, 218 (M 241-243):

1. abar mēnōgān ī andar mardōm <tan> kāregar, u-šān kār, az nigēz ī veh dēn.
2. hād. andar šāyed-sāmān, az āfurišn ud dahišn, mēnōgān andar mardōm tan kāregar māyagvar ēn-z cahār, ī ast: ruvān, gyān, fravahr, ud bōy.
3. ruvān ast ox [xvadāy] ī abar tan: cōn kadagxvadāy <xvadāy abar> kadag ud asvār <abar> asp, ud rāyēnīdār ī tan, ud gyān ud bōy ud fravahr hāmis vāxš ī pediš, ud andar-šān abzārumand ruvān.
4. gyān vād ī az fravahr-cihr uštānēnīdag ped uštānīh, uštānumand-dāštār ī ast, ī tan: cōn drust-vinārdār ī <kadag ī> kadagxvdāy, ud kārīg-dāštār ī asp <ī> asvār. ēd ī ka az tan jud baved, tan margīhed: cōn ka stūn ī kadag škīhed kadag hambahed.
5. ud fravahr-cihr dāštār ud parvardār ī tan: cōn vīrāstār ud ābādān-dāštār ī kadagxvadāy kadag, ud mādiyār ī asvār asp. ēd ī ka az tan jud baved tan šaved zōr, ud agār māned: cōn kadag ī ka az vīrāyišn hilīhed avīrānīhed.
6. ud bōy rōšn-dāštār <ī tan: cōn rōšn-dāštār> ī kadagxvadāy kadag, ud vēnāgēnīdār ī asvār asp. ud vēnāgēnīdār ī kadagxvadāy andar kadag ud asvār abar asp: cōn rōšnīh ī gēhān xvaršēd, ud cirāh ī andar kadag. ud ēd ī ka az tan judāgīhed, ruvān andar tan anāgāh, ud tan andar-z zīndagīh a-mārišn baved.
7. ud ruvān, ped fravahr ud bōy ud gyān tan-abzārīh, ped xvēškārīh ī aviš frēstīd abēvahānagīh; u-š xvēškārīh kušīšnīg vānīdārīh ī druz: cōn asvār, ped asp zēnabzārīh, zadārīh ud vānīdārīh ī dušmen. ud dušmen ī ruvān, cōn dušmen-z ī-š abzārān kīrrēnīdag ī druz, ō marnzēnīdārīh ī dām: āz ud varan ud xēšm ud kēn ud nang ud arešk-iz ī mad ēsted ō tan, kušīšn ī abāg
8. razmbed ruvān, ped avvēnīdan ud tarvēnīdan ī az razm, kū ped hān ī ōy vānīdārīh marnzānd ud agārēnānd abārīg kušīšnīg dahišnān ī vehīh.

9. ox, xvadāy, ud razmbed ruvān, ka ped fravahr ud bōy ud gyān tan-abzārīh, ud amehrspond ī-š ayyār, āhang ī kušīšn ī abāg druz, vigrād ud arvand ped xvēš tagīgīh druz vānīdār, ud az tan bē kirdār, druz az gēhān bē, gennāg mēnōg zad ud vānīd ud apādixšāy kird, ud xvad az druz bōxt ahlav.

10. ka-š pez škenn ī rah ī do asp az hamemāl, <ruvān> az tan vihēz baved, ped xvēš xūbgārīh ud hamnirōgīh pērōzīhā ō bun franāmīdan, ud az ōy ī xvadāy frēstīdār ī ō kušīšn framān abesar ī pērāmōn madan, ud ped jāyēdān āsān pur-urvāhm gāh nišastan.

11. ka ped frēb ī az hamemāl ašgahānīg āsānīh-dōšagīhā andar kušīšn starār, ud az amehrspond bē-āhang, ud ō druz frāz-āhang baved, ud durvandīhed, ud druz pediš abarvēzīhed, ud ēvtāg andar druzīšn vālīhed, ud dastgravīg ō druz gyāg kašīhed ud dā fraškird gravīg zēndānīhed.

12. veh dēn pēdāgīh: hān ī-š nēk ahlavīh, gētīg husravīh nišān pediš; <hān ī-š> anāg durvandīh, gētīg dušravīh daxšag pessazagīhā.

Translation:

“1. On the working spirits in the body of humans, and their function, according to the point-of-view of the Good Religion.

2. In the boundaries of possibility in the spiritual and material creations, the working spirits of the human body are generally these four: urvan, vyāna, fravaši and baoḍa.

3. Urvan is the lord (Av. ahu) [master] over the body: like a master of the household over the house, and like the one on horseback over the horse; it is the governor of the person. The vyāna, baoḍa, and fravaši-nature¹ are all the spirits (vāxš) in it, and within them the pundit is the urvan.

4. Vyāna is the wind from fravaši-nature that, animated by the animation (uštāna), maintains the body animate, like the fixator of the master's house and the ready-maker of the horseman's horse. Whenever the vyāna separates from the body, the body dies. Like the pillar of a house that if broken, the house crumbles.

5. Fravaši-nature is the possessor and nurturer of the body, like the grower and builder of the master's house and the caretaker of the horseman's horse. Whenever

¹ This term has been incorrectly understood by scholars. fravaši(-nature) has no connection to the pre-eternal soul, but is a wind in the body, comparable to the Indian *samāna*.

the fravaši(-nature) separates from the body, the body is rendered powerless and weak, just as the house that is ruined when caretaking of it is given up.

6. Baoḍa keeps the body alight, like the one keeping the master's house alight, and the clear-sightener of the horseman's horse, and the horseman on the horse, and the master in the house, like the sun's light in the world, and light of the lantern in the house. When baoḍa separates from the body, the urvan is rendered ignorant in the body, and the body becomes un-sensing in life.

7. Urvan, together with the bodily functions of fravaši(-nature), baoḍa and vyāna, has come to fulfill a duty, and has no excuse (to reject it); and its duty is to attempt to overcome falsehood. Like the horseman, who through the martial function of the horse, (attacks) to kill and defeat the enemy. The enemy of urvan (i.e. falsehood), with its tools that are (mis-)creations of falsehood, (attack) to destroy the good creations: Avarice, Lust, Anger, Grudge, Defamation and Envy, comes to the body, and fight

8. With the urvan, who is in charge of war, rebuke and frustrate him from the battle, and by overcoming him, destroy and demolish other good creations.

9. The lord, master and in-charge-of-war is urvan, who with the bodily functions of fravaši(-nature) and baoḍa and vyāna, and with the help of the Holy Immortals, decides to fight Falsehood, awake and swift, with his valiance defeats the Falsehood and chases it outside the body. It expels the Falsehood from the material world and makes the Evil Spirit defeated, conquered and weak; and he himself becomes liberated from Falsehood and righteous.

10. When the two-horsed chariot (/ two legged body) is broken by the enemy (Death), the urvan leaves the soul, through its good-working and support, victoriously proceeds to the origin, and by the order of the Lord who had sent him to fight (Falsehood) he is given a victorious crown, and sits immortal in the blessed and much-merry place.

11. And if it is deceived by the Enemy, with indolence, sloth and ignorance, lazy in battle, unwilling to the Holy Immortals and willing to the Falsehood, becomes wicked and Falsehood is undefeated before him, and grows uniquely in lying, it is then bound and dragged to the abode of Falsehood, and until Renovation it is prisoner there.

12. Is manifest from the Good Religion (= an Avestan quotation):

‘The sign of a good man is the righteousness (of his fravaši) and good name in the

world; the sign of a bad man, wickedness (of his *fravaṣi*) and bad name in the world, each deservedly.”

This allegory chariot-rider-horse can be compared to a passage in Kaṭha Upaniṣad, I.3.3-11:

“Regard the self (Skt. *ātman*) the chariot’s lord, and the body the chariot; regard consciousness (Skt. *buddhi*) the charioteer, and mind (Skt. *manas*) the reigns!

Regard the senses (Skt. *indryāṇi*) the horse, and the tangible (Skt. *gocara*) the way. The wise say: Blessed is the self who is united with the senses and the mind.

Who is uninformed, his mind is unorganized, and his senses not united, like bad horses for the charioteer.

Who is knowledgeable, his mind is organized and his senses united, like good horses for the charioteer.

Who is uninformed, his mind is without organization and impure, he will not reach (the best) station, and returns to the material life (Skt. *saṃsāra*).

He who is knowledgeable, his mind is with organization and pure, he will reach the state that he will not be reborn again.

The knowledgeable is like a charioteer who can fasten the reigns of mind, he will reach the end of the road, the highest station of Viṣṇu.

Beyond the senses are the things (Skt. *arthā*), beyond the things is the mind. beyond the mind is consciousness, beyond consciousness is the great self (Skt. *ātmā mahān*).

Beyond the great is the invisible (Skt. *avyakta*), and beyond the invisible is Puruṣa. Beyond Puruṣa is nothingness. It is the completion (Skt. *kāṣṭhā*). It is the final step.”

This metaphor of the mind as the leader, body as chariot, and senses as horses is found again once more in the Maitrī Upaniṣad, II.6.¹

In both the Dēnkird and the Upaniṣad, the soul is the lord; here Av. *urvan* and Skt. *ātman* have the same meaning.¹ In Pārsīg, *grīv* comes in place of both Skt. *ātman*

¹ Cf. Roṣu (1978), Les Conceptions psychologiques dans les textes médicaux indiens, pp. 51.

¹ The Upaniṣad places *ātman* against *śarīra* ‘body’. Zoroāstra places *anman* ‘life-wind’ against *kəhrp* ‘body’ (Y. 30.7)

and Aram. *npš*.¹ The urvan is one of the five spirits of humans in this Avestan list (Yt. 13.149 & 155, Cf. Y. 26.4):

ahūmca daēnəmca baodasca urvānəmca fravašīmca.

“The ahu, the daēnā, the baoda, the urvan, the fravaši”

ahu means ‘existence, world’, and its presence in this list indicates that it has gained a new meaning. Its Vedic counterpart, *asu*, is semantically related to Skt. *manas* ‘mind’; *asu* is the material pillar of life (*āyus*), and is sometimes used interchangeably with *prāṇa*, the life-wind. In the Avesta, *ahu* has the same meaning, and in the list above, replaces *uštāna*. So *ahu* is the same as *vyāna*, the animated wind, life-giver to the body and its pillar. We find this notion of ‘pillar’ in a Parthian Manichaean text:¹

cē burd ud razman ast, cvāyōn stūn ud nārvān dālōg kē kadag ud viḍān bared, ud cvāyōn gyān kē tanbār bared.

‘For it is patient and upright, like the pillar and elm tree, that carries the house and tent, and like the *vyāna* that carries the body.’

Of those five, *ahu* is destroyed after its separation from the body; death is the end of *ahu*. Kellens regards *baoda* as mortal. If *vyāna* (or *ahu*) is more or less akin to *θυμός*, *baoda* is more or less akin to *voũç*. *Baoda* is perception, and not just perception based on the five senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch (like *buddhi*), but also perception based on thought. Thus, *baoda* can be regarded as the “eye” and “enlightener” of the urvan. After death, urvan needs the *baoda*. Kellens gives no proof for its death, yet we have proofs for the unity of *baoda* and urvan post-mortem (see above, *Sad dar-i Bundahiš*, Ch. 98).

¹ Specially in Manichaean literature. Sogd. *γryw jywndg / jwndy γryw*; Parth. *gryw jywndg*; Pers. *gryw zyandg*; Syr. *npš ‘hyt’*.

¹ Differently views Kellens (1995), pp. 21: “Une fois écartés le mot qui désigne de la façon la plus générale l'état de existence (ahu-) ...”

¹ Roşu (1978), pp. 46.

¹ Skjærvø, *Fravardīn Yasht IV*⁸: *Faisons l'amour et dansons*, pp. 8.