

Word Vayuna in *Ṛgveda*.

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Jan 27, 2017

Abstract

This short note proposes novel senses for the word *vayúna* as occurring in *Ṛgveda*. Translation of all *ṛk*-s containing it is given.

The word *vayúna* occurs in *Ṛgveda* as a separate word or in a composite 35 times. It is used as a neuter noun both in singular and plural and in nom., acc. and loc. cases. Despite that many occurrences its meaning remained elusive — which statement can be illustrated by senses assigned to it by different translators and scholars.

Monier-Williams derived it from *vī* and gave the following senses for occurrences in *Ṛgveda*: “rule, order, custom”, “distinctness, clearness, brightness”, “a mark, aim”, “a path, way, expedient”, and for other texts also “knowledge, wisdom”, “clear”, “moving, active, alive”, “waving, agitated, restless”.

H.H.Wilson also derived it from the root *vī* (to set in motion, arouse, excite, impel) and assigned to it in his translation [Wil66] of *Ṛgveda* senses “work”, “consciousness”, “religious duty”, “rite”, “skill”, etc. and in the dictionary he also gives sense “a temple” adopting it from *Uṇādi Sūtra* 3.61.

R.T.H Griffith in his translation [Gri96] gives “distinct perception”; “operation”, “work”, “task”, “rite”, “duty”; “rule”, “ordinance”, “law”; “pathway”, “skill”, “form of knowledge”; “symbol”.

H.Grassmann [Gra73, col.1216] derived it from the root *vi* (which Monier-Williams listed as *ve*, 3rd. sing. *vayati*, “to weave, interweave, braid”) and assigned as “original” meaning “fabric” and then derived from it “*jedes kunstreiche Werk, insbesondere ein solches, wobei Kenntniss und Geschick erfordert wird*” (every artful work, in particular, one requiring knowledge and skill) and “*das Werk des Gottesdienstes, Opferwerk*” (the work of worship, sacrifice) and then also hardly related to “fabric” sense “*Helligkeit, Licht*” (brightness, light).

K.F. Geldner in [Gel03] translates it as “die Wege”, “die Zeiten”, “rechter Zeit”, “zeitlich”, “der Bescheid”, “richtet”, “die rechte Stunde”, “die Reihenfolge”, “Richtzeichen”, “Richtung”, “die Richte”, “die Reihe der Tage”, “die Richtwege”, “feste Regeln”.

Т.Я.Елизаренкова in her translation [Eliz89], [Eliz95], [Eliz99] of *Ṛgveda*, mostly following Geldner, used “граница” (boundary), “веха” (milepost, progress mark); “порядок” (order), “череда” (sequence), “правило” (rule), “обычай” (custom); “отмеченное время” (specific, marked time), “огороженное место” (marked off place), “установленная форма” (established form); “различное” (distinct), “примета” (sign?), “знак” (sign); “жертвенное дело” (sacrificial deed).

P. Thieme proposed “envelopment, protective envelope”, while Renou gives “marque distinctive” (distinctive marks).

Translation of the word *vayúna* by S.W. Jamison and J.P. Brereton [JB14] is the most consistent of all mentioned translations since it assigns only three senses “(ritual) pattern”; “tracery”, “trajectory” with almost all occurrences translated as “pattern”. The only problem with this gloss is that it does not fit well in corresponding contexts (which is, of course highly subjective judgment dependent on overall interpretation of the stanzas and hymns the word occurs in).

Unlike mentioned above translations that approached *R̥gveda* from *adhiyajña* (performance of rituals) and *adhidaivata* (reference to deities) perspectives, here the approach is from *adhyātma* (reference to individual) perspective which results in a novel senses for the word *vayúna* and many stanzas of *R̥gveda*.

It is proposed here to derive *vayúna* from the root *vī* with senses “to set in motion, arouse, excite, impel” by adding to the strengthened root suffix *-una*. Since there are fewer than a dozen words in Sanskrit derived with the suffix *-una*, it is proposed to define a semantic cluster of resulting senses through the following analogy:

The noun vayúna relates to the verb vī (to set in motion, arouse, excite, impel) similarly to how the noun dharúṇa (basis , foundation , firm ground, support) relates to the verb dhṛ (to maintain, keep, preserve).

The analogy defines a semantic cluster of *vayúna*’s senses as “that which provides or affords a basis or support for setting in motion, arousing , exciting , or impelling”. From all less general senses that belong to this cluster, those that fit well in some occurrences of *vayúna* in the *R̥gveda* were selected. All but one of them can be organized according to the scale “given externally — internalized” and are

“stimulus – inducement – incentive – enticement – impulsion – motive – target (of actions)”.

In that one other case (3.29.3) the sense is “kindling” which belongs to the cluster because kindling plays the role of “that which affords a basis for arousing flames from spark created in a tinder”:

3.29.3:

*uttānāyāmáva bharā cikitvān sadyáh právitā vṛṣaṇam jajāna |
aruṣástūpo rúśadasyapája idāyāsputró vayúne’janiṣṭa || 3||*

Having noticed [the ember] throw [it] into the stretched out [tinder]!
Instantly the “approached one” gave birth to the impregnating one;
having reddish crest, shining, the child created [his own] vigour
from a libation [of ghee] into the kindling.

Stanzas (*rk*-s) with the sense “stimulus”.

4.51.1:

*idámu tyátpurutámam purástājjyótistámaso vayúnāvadasthāt |
nūnám divó duhitáro vibhātīrgātúm kṛṇavannuśáso jánāya || 1||*

This ever-recurring from the east
light [coming] from the darkness remains stimulating
so that in the future the daughters of the Heaven (the Dawns), shining forth,
would create an unimpeded way for a person of the dawn.

6.7.5:

*váśvānara táva táni vratāni mahānyagne nákirá dadharṣa |
yájjáyamānaḥ pitrórupásthé'vindaḥ ketúm vayúneṣvāhnām || 5||*

O common to all men! These your vast
spheres of actions nothing assails.
When being born in the lap of two parents
he finds a focus midst daylight stimuli.

Stanzas (*ṛk*-s) with the sense “inducement”.

1.92.6:

*átāriṣma támasaspārámasyóṣā uchántī vayúnā kṛṇoti |
śriyé chāndo ná smayate vibhātī suprátikā saumanasāyājīgaḥ || 6||*

We crossed to the opposite of this darkness side
growing brighter morning light creates inducements;
as if a purport for a good fortune, she (the Dawn), resplendent, smiles;
she of beautiful form made [us] awake to be cheerful.

4.16.3:

*kavírná niṇyám vidáthāni sādhanvṛṣā yátsékam vipipānó árcāt |
divá ithá jījanatsapta kārúnāhnā ciccakrurvayúnā gṛṇántaḥ || 3||*

Bringing to realization teaching sessions, like a poet — what is hidden,
the bull, since he illuminates with stanzas,
shall beget from the Heaven the seven singers;
throughout the day the extolling [singers] create inducements.

6.21.3:

*sá úttámo'vayunám tatanvátsúryeṇa vayúnavaccakāra |
kadá te mártā amṛtasya dháméyakṣanto ná minanti svadhāvaḥ || 3||*

He, indeed, by means of the sun made lacking inducements darkness,
that has spread, to have an inducement.
When mortals seeking to sacrifice do not diminish
your, immortal's, condition, O having inherent power!

Stanza (*rk*) with the sense “incentive”.

evá te gr̥tsamadáh̄ sūra mánmāvasyávo ná vayúnāni takṣuḥ |
brahmaṇyánta indra te návīya ísamúrjaṃ suksítim̄ sumnámasyuh̄ || 8||

Indeed for thee *Gṛtsamada*-s, o hero,
fashioned [this] expression of thought, as he who seeks a favour [fashions] incentives.
[They,] creating sacred formulas, [fashioned], for you, o *Indra*, a new [an expression of thought];
they obtained refreshing drink, strength, good refuge, benevolence.

Stanzas (*rk*-s) with the sense “enticement”.

1.182.1:

ábhūdidám̄ vayúnámó śú bhūṣatā rátho vṛṣaṇvānmádatā manīṣiṇaḥ |
dhiyaṃjinvá dhīṣṇyā víspālāvasū divó nápātā sukṛte súcivratā || 1||

This has arisen: do ye seek well to procure an enticement
The chariot is yoked with the bull (the extract of Soma plant) — do ye rejoice, O ye possessing
the [correct] conception!
The two offsprings of the Heaven, animating the vision, mindful, those who valued *Viśpalā* —
for him whose actions are good, their mode of action is illuminating.

1.189.1:

ágne náya supáthā rāyē asmánvísuvāni deva vayúnāni vidvān |
yuyodhyaṣmájjuhuraṇáméno bhūyīṣṭhāṃ te náma-uktim̄ vidhema || 1||

O *Agni*, lead us to virtuous ways for the sake of the treasure,
O *deva*, [you,] knowing all enticements!
ward off from us leading [us] astray evil;
we will present to you the most important expression of adoration!

2.24.5:

sánā tá ká cidbhúvanā bhávītvā mādbhīḥ śarádbhirdúro varanta vaḥ |
áyatantā carato anyádanyadídya cákára vayúnā bráhmaṇaspátīḥ || 5||

From old, aspects of life, any one whatsoever, [are] states of becoming;
through months, years they obstructed the doors for you.
The two not-aligning traveled through one [aspect] after another
that the master of the sacred formula has rendered as enticements.

2.34.4:

*prkṣé tã víśvā bhúvanā vavakṣire mitráya vā sádamá jírádānavah |
pṛṣadaśvāso anavabhrúrādhasa rjipyáso ná vayúneṣu dhūrśadaḥ || 4 ||*

All these facets of life become stronger to nourish [you];
quick to bestow, [come] here at any time to be [our] patrons.
Having spotted horses, [giving] satisfaction that does not push one down
as if going straight midst enticements, they are guiding the chariot.

4.5.13:

*ká maryádā vayúnā káddha vāmámáchā gamema raghávo ná vájam |
kadá no devírāmṛtasya pátnīḥ súro várṇena tatanannuśáṣaḥ || 13 ||*

What “eating mortals” enticements, what desirable things [are]
towards which we shall go like racers towards the prize?
When would the morning sun through its appearance extend the dawns —
our *dev*-s, mistresses of an immortal one (*Agni*).

5.48.2:

*tã atnata vayúnaṃ vīrávakṣaṇaṃ samānyá vrtáyā víśvamá rájaḥ |
ápo ápācīrāparā ápejate prá pūrvābhīstirate devayúrjanaḥ || 2 ||*

They (the waters) together with concealed one extended the enticement,
which the hero strengthens, towards every region;
sacrificial act censures turning backwards, “western” (appearing at dusk) waters;
seeking *deva*-s human sets out by means of those (waters) that are “eastern” (appearing at dawn).

10.44.7:

*eváuvāpāgāpare santu dūḍhyó'śvā yéśāṃ duryúja āyuyujré |
itthá yé prágūpare sánti dāvāne purúṇi yátra vayúnāni bhójanā || 7 ||*

In the same manner as above, may in future bad visions
of those, whose difficult to be yoked horses were joined together, be going backwards —
just as afterwards [when they become yoked well] they will be going forward to bestow,
in which case many enticements [become] sources of pleasure.

10.46.8:

*prá jihváyā bharate vépo agníḥ prá vayúnāni cetasā pṛthivyāḥ |
tāmāyāvah śucáyantaṃ pāvakāṃ mandráṃ hótāraṃ dadhire yájiṣṭham || 8||*

Agni brings forth the agitation with [his] tongue;
with imprints of mental concentration [he brings] forth earthly enticements.
Him, causing to shine, purifying, agreeable envoker,
agitated [men] have established, [him who is] sacrificing best.

10.49.5:

*ahám randhayaṃ mṛgayaṃ śrutárvaṇe yánmájihīta vayúnā canānuṣák |
ahám veśám namrámāyáve'karamahám savyāya pádḡṛbhimarandhayam || 5||*

I shall cause a savage to become subject to him who has oral lore
when he did betake himself time after time to me, not to [earthly] enticements.
I made a [mere]settler submissive to an agitated [by me] man.
I caused him who grasps feet to become subject to him who extracts [Soma juice].

10.114.3:

*cātuṣkapardā yuvatīḥ supésā ghṛtápratīkā vayúnāni vaste |
tásyāṃ suparṇā vṛṣaṇā ní ṣedaturyátra devá dadhiré bhāgadhéyam || 3||*

Having four braids girl of intricate form
appearing as ghee enters enticements.
Two having beautiful wings impregnating [hawks?] have taken a seat in her
wherein *deva*-s have established the giving of fortune.

Stanzas (*rk*-s) with the sense “impulsion”.

1.92.2:

*údapaptannaruṇá bhānāvo vṛthā svāyújo áruṣīrgá ayukṣata |
ákrannuṣáso vayúnāni pūrváthā rúsantaṃ bhānúmáruṣīraśísrayuḥ || 2||*

Moving upwards lights have ascended;
effortlessly they yoked easy-to-yoke reddish cows;
first of all they effected impulsion of the dawn,
they spread, diffused radiant light, the reddish [cows].

3.3.4:

*pitā yajñānāmasuro vipascītāṃ vimānamagnīrvayūnaṃ ca vāghātām |
ā viveśa ródasī bhūrivarpasā purupriyó bhandate dhāmabhiḥ kavīḥ || 4 ||*

Father of sacrifice, *asura* of those who are charged with excitement,
regulator and impulsion of those who make effort,
he entered the Earth and the Heaven by means of [his own] manifoldness.
The poet, dear to many, is greeted throughout dwellings with praise.

Stanzas (*ṛk*-s) with the sense “motive”.

1.72.7:

*vidvāñ agne vayúnāni kṣitīnāṃ vyānuṣákchurúdho jīvāse dhāḥ |
antarvidvāñ ádhvano devayānānátandro dūtó abhavo havirvāt || 7 ||*

Knowing, O *Agni*, motives [characteristic] of domains [of human existence]
you shall parcel out one after another proliferating riches [so as] to revive [the domains].
Having found inside pathways leading to *deva*-s,
untiring messenger became the carrier of oblations.

1.145.5:

*sá vñ mṛgó ápyo vanargúrúpa tvacyupamásyāṃ ní dhāyi |
vyābravidvayúnā mártýebhyo'gnīrvīdvāñ ṛtacíddhí satyáḥ || 5 ||*

He, indeed, coming from waters, roaming forest beast,
was put into uppermost tongue.
For mortals he explained motives — *Agni*, who knows [them],
because piling *ṛta* [he becomes] real.

1.152.6:

*ā dhenávo māmāteyámávantīrbrahmapríyaṃ pīpayansásminnūdhan |
pitvó bhikṣeta vayúnāni vidvánāsávívāsannáditimurusyet || 6 ||*

Here the cows, helping the son of *Mamatā*,
swell favoured-by-priests [drink], in him, in the udder.
He who knows all motives may desire nourishment —
seeking to reach *Aditi* with [his] mouth should make a wide space [for him].

2.19.3:

*sá máhina índro árṇo apám prárayadahiháčhā samudrám |
ájanayatsúryam vidád gá aktúnáhnām vayúnāni sādhat || 3||*

He, causing joy *Indra*, snake-slayer,
who caused flooding waters to arise towards the sea,
who caused the sun to emerge, who found the cows—
throughout the night he shall straighten daylight motives.

3.5.6:

*ṛbhúścakra íḍyam cárū náma vísvāni devó vayúnāni vidvān |
sasásya cárma ghṛtávatpadám véstádídagní rakṣatyáprayuchan || 6||*

The skillful one assumed to-be-lauded agreeable aspect —
deva knowing all motives;
the shield of sleep, rich in ghee track of the bird —
that *Agni*, non-heedless, guards.

5.81.1:

*yuñjáte mána utá yuñjate dhíyo víprā víprasya brható vipascítaḥ |
ví hótrā dadhe vayunāvídéka ínmahí devásya savitúḥ páriṣṭutih || 1||*

Inwardly excited ones yoke the mind, yoke visions —
they, who are charged with the excitement of the bright wise one.
He alone, who knows motives, distributes invocations;
extensive is the round of praises of *deva Savitr*.

6.15.10:

*tám suprátikaṃ sudṛśaṃ sváñcamávidvāṃso vidúṣtaraṃ sapema |
sá yakṣadvísvā vayúnāni vidvānprá havyámagníramṛteṣu vocat || 10||*

We, who do not know, can seek after the more knowledgeable one —
after him, having beautiful form, keen-sighted, good at going around [obstacles] —
so that he, knowing all motives, would sacrifice,
so that *Agni* would announce among immortals the oblation.

6.52.12:

*imám no agne adhvarám hótarvayunaśó yaja |
cikitvándávyaṃ jánam || 12||*

O *Agni*, this our proceeding-on-its-way sacrifice,
O invoker, do consecrate, repeating the motive (for the sacrifice),
being attentive to the divine race!

7.75.4:

*eṣá syá yujāná parākátpāñca kṣitíḥ pári sadyó jigāti |
abhipásyantī vayúnā jánānāṃ divó duhitá bhúvanasya pátnī || 4||*

This very one becoming involved from a distance,
permeates the five domains at once.
Perceiving motives of living beings,
daughter of the Heaven [is] the mistress of [this] place of existence.

7.100.5:

*prá tátte adyá śipiviṣṭa námāryáḥ śamsāmi vayúnāni vidván |
tám tvā grṇāmi tavásamátavyānkṣáyantamasyá rájasaḥ parāké || 5||*

Now then, this your name “pervaded by rays” (*Śipiviṣṭa*)
[is] of the tending upwards, of knowing motives one (*Agni*).
Such thee — strong — I, [who is] not stronger, extol,
[thee,] having the power over this region, [though] being far away.

8.66.8:

*vṛkaścidasya vāraṇá urāmáthirá vayúneṣu bhūṣati |
sémám na stómaṃ jujuṣāṇá á gahíndra prá citráyā dhiyá || 8||*

He indeed who tears, his resistance, having venue to disturb the ewe,
acts according to [our] motives.
He is enjoying again and again this our chant.
Do come, O *Indra* here, [come] forth with the help of capturing attention vision!

10.122.2:

*juṣāṇó agne práti harya me váco víśvāni vidvānvayúnāni sukrato |
ghṛtanirṇigbráhmaṇe gātúmería táva devā ajanayannānu vratám || 2||*

Taking pleasure in return, O *Agni*, enjoy my utterance,
you, knowing all motives, O skillful one!
Having ghee for a garment, make an unimpeded pathway for the sacred formula to arise —
[the pathway that] *deva*-s begot according to your ways.

Stanzas (*ṛk*-s) with the sense “target (of actions)”.

1.144.5:

*tāmīṃ hinvanti dhītáyo dáśa vríšo devāṃ mártāsa ūtáye havāmahe |
dhánorádhi praváta á sá ṛṇvatyabhivrájadbhivayúnā návādhita || 5||*

It is him visions, ten ribs impel.
We, mortals, approach you for help.
From above the bow towards the heights he rises;
with [his] wandering [flames] he has established for him self new targets.

1.162.18:

*cátustrimśadvājíno devábandhorvánkrírásvasya svádhitiḥ sámēti |
áchidrā gátrā vayúnā kṛṇota páruṣparuranughúsyā ví śasta || 18||*

The axe goes towards the ribs of the horse,
of the stallion having connection to *deva*-s.
do ye make unbroken limbs targets [for the axe]
do ye dissect [them] joint-by-joint announcing aloud [their names].

6.75.14:

*áhiriva bhogáḥ páryeti bāhúṃ jyáyā hetíṃ paribádhamānaḥ |
hastaghno víśvā vayúnāni vidvānpúmānpúmāṃsaṃ pári pātu víśvátaḥ || 14||*

Like a snake it (a long whip) coils around the forearm
preventing release of the bowstring.
Destroying hands, finding all targets
let the male protect a male in every way.

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