

The Upaniṣad being mainly intended for a knowledge of its meaning, there should be no want of care in the study of the text. Therefore here follows a lesson on *Śikṣā*, the doctrine of pronunciation.

ॐ शीक्षां व्याख्यास्यामः ।
वर्णः स्वरः । मात्रा बलम् । साम सन्तानः ।
इत्युक्तः शीक्षाध्यायः ॥
om śikṣāṃ vyākhyāsyāmaḥ |
varṇaḥ svaraḥ | mātṛā balam | sāma santānaḥ |
ityuktaḥ śikṣādhyāyaḥ ||

Om! We shall treat of the phonetics: sound, rhythm, quantity, strength, modulation, union. Thus has been declared the lesson on phonetics.

Phonetics (*śikṣā*) is the science which treats of sounds and their pronunciation. Or, the word '*śikṣā*' may here signify the sounds *etc.* which are treated of in that science. Sound: such as 'ā'. Rhythm: such as *udātta* or high-pitched tone. Length: short, long, *etc.* Strength: intensity of effort. Modulation: pronunciation of sounds in the middle tone. Union: conjunction of several sounds.—These are the things to be learnt. Thus far is the lesson on phonetics, in these words the Upaniṣad concludes the present subject with a view to proceed to the next.

For him who, by the recitation of the mantra given in the first *anuvāka*, has removed obstacles, it is proper to proceed with the text treating of the ways of contemplation and of the nature of Brahman. As the text of the Upaniṣad is mainly intended for a knowledge of the things therein treated of, one should spare no pains in learning the text; and accordingly the Upaniṣad proceeds with a lesson on phonetics. Here one may ask, what if one be careless? We reply: carelessness will lead to evil. It has been said, "The mantra, when wanting in rhythm or sound, or when wrongly used, conveys not the intended idea. That thunderbolt of speech will ruin the worshipper as the word '*indra-śatru*' did owing to a fault in rhythm".

(Objection:)—If so, this lesson should have been given in the *karma-kāṇḍa* or ritualistic section.

(Answer:)—True. For that very reason,—as the lesson subserves both the sections, —it is given between the two sections.

(Objection:)—Then, as subservient to both, let it be given at the beginning of the Veda.

(Answer:)—Though subservient to both, it has to be given in the theosophical section in order to shew its greater use as regards knowledge. As to the ritualistic section, despite the chance of misunderstanding the scriptures owing to error in the rhythm and sound,

it is possible to do away with any imperfection in the performance by *prāyaśchitta* or an expiatory act. Accordingly, in such cases, the Veda gives the following mantra for an expiatory offering of clarified butter:

“Whatever in the sacrifice is wrongly done, unknown or known, do, O Agni, rectify that (part) of this (sacrifice); thou indeed knowest what is right.”

On the contrary, when the scriptures in the theosophical section are wrongly understood, the imperfection cannot be made up for. Indeed, it is not possible to do away with wrong knowledge by an expiatory act. We have never seen an illusory perception of serpent in a rope removed by the reciting of the Gāyatrī hymn. Wherefore no expiatory act whatever is enjoined in connection with knowledge, in the same way that it is enjoined in connection with the rituals. On the contrary, in the case of him who, striving in the path of wisdom commits any sin, the scriptures deny all expiation other than theosophy, in the following words:

“If the yogin should unguardedly commit a sin, he should resort to yoga alone, never to any other thing such as mantra.”

Wherefore the lesson on the phonetics is given here especially to enjoin great care in the study of the Upaniṣads, so that there may be no defect in the knowledge acquired and that the scripture may be understood aright.