

CHAPTER IV.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CONDITIONS AS REFLECTED IN THE SIMILIES IN THE RĀMĀYANA.

An author is generally believed to be influenced by the age to which he belongs. He gives a sort of reflection of the actual life and society of his own period. If he tries sincerely to depict the conditions prevalent in his times, his work becomes highly important as a source of information. Even if he is not conscientious^u in giving a faithful picture of his age, the facts regarding it are likely to creep in, in his writing.

If we look to the ancient Indian literature we find that in many cases a picture of the age to which a particular author belonged is given in his work. But while investigating the conditions depicted in a work one must note that the chronology rests on a slippery ground as far as the ancient Indian literature is concerned. So the conclusions arrived at in that case rest more or less on inference and conjectures. They can be corroborated by other means like the repetitions in the same work, relevant references in the contemporary or subsequent literature and such other evidences.

The Rāmāyana, though traditionally known as Itihāsa cannot be considered as a purely historical work. But its importance as a source of information regarding the age to which it belonged need not be underestimated on that ground. Being an epic, it contains a representation of the conditions prevalent at the time of its composition. The extensive

span

323

of its story has naturally endeared it with such a capacity. Its starting point is the royal palace of Ayodhya, and from there the story embraces in its run the wide Gangetic plains, the large forests of the central and Southern India and finally Lanka. Thus it covers up a big sub-continent. Moreover being a long epic it has a number of spots in the course of its narrative where it alludes to the prevalent social and cultural conditions.

Vālmiki's presentation though literary and poetic has much reality in it. He has written with a sincerity of heart. He wanted to narrate the entire life of the hero of the epic and it will be seen that he has tried to depict it graphically in all its stages. He had certain ideals which he wanted to establish by illustrating them in his narration. Even a cursory reading will give an idea about his aims and objects in composing this epic. Thus it is quite natural that he had to refer to so many things. Thus he describes the events in the life of the persons whom he presents as the characters of the epic. He refers to the general mode of life of the people, and also refers to the cultural and social conditions in which the people lived. On the whole his work will give an impression that it refers to almost all the walks of life.

In order to make his work beautiful the poet has used similes, metaphors and such other figures of speech. These figures of speech are based on similarity, so the very use of these figures of speech required the allusion to an object similar to the one which the poet wanted to describe. The author

of the Rāmāyana has given a number of similes which are valuable as a source of information regarding the cultural and social conditions of the time. A close study of such similes is capable of yielding good results. These similes can give us a great deal of information regarding the glorious past and when giving that knowledge, they will give us inspiration to fix our attention as to what we should aspire to achieve and realise especially when we pass through a critical period of our history, and endeavour to make an all sided progress to build a welfare state, a sort of a heaven of bliss for our ^{count} ~~contary~~-men.

If we look to the range of reference or in other words the field of observation of Vālmiki, we can find that it is quite extensive and embraces so many things. These similes refer to things connected with the life of an individual as well as that of the people in general. They refer to the different aspects of human life and present the life in all its diverse ways of intricacies and complications.

Many similes refer to the details of sacrifices and ritualistic ceremonies. For these references it can be said that the age of the Rāmāyana as well as the subsequent long period was such that the sacrifice was quite widely prevalent. So it is quite natural that the references to it are many. In fact the culture represented in the epic is essentially Brahmanic and as such this work is quite likely to have plenty of such references.

The epic has the story of a prince as its main narrative so the references to the state, government, administration of law and justice, external and internal policy of a state, the system of punishment, the rules of conduct and attitude and manners of the courtiers, the fights and ⁿinvasions, armies and their maintenance etc. are quite likely to be there. While describing the ^eadventures of the hero, the author has to refer to the customs and beliefs of different tribes of the people who resided in the regions through which the hero passed. These references give valuable data for a sociological study of the different people belonging to a remote past. He refers to rain clouds and agriculture. We being an agriculturist nation, such references are important for us as they give us information regarding the system of agriculture prevalent in that age. He has described the expedition and the battle fought on the plains of Lankā for recovering the heroine of the epic; and so the references to the warfare are quite likely to occur in this epoc. This gives us the idea of the ways and means of warfare the weapons of war, the customs which were observed during the period of war as well as that of peace, the method of settling disputes and arriving at a compromise. The belief in good and bad omens is also likely to be referred to as the people must have believed in them while starting for a dreadful battle. The author gives ideals for several relations in human life, like these between a mother and a son, a brother and a brother, the ruler and the ruled, the master and the servant

and above all he puts forth a valuable ideal of the conjugal love. So these references may enable us to peep into the conditions of these relations, existent in the family as well as in ^{the} ~~the~~ political field. He would refer to the meteors to describe the fall of persons. That would give us information regarding the development of astronomy in that age. He describes big cities like Ayodhyā, Mithilā, Kiskindhā and Laṅkā. He also describes the beautiful roads, gardens, parks and mansions of these cities. Such references give us a picture of an advanced type of culture and civilization. They suggest the development of the sciences of building-construction, engineering architecture and sculpture. He has taken so many wild and tame animals and birds as upamānas. This shows the author's keen observation. It also throws light on the tastes of the people of that age. He has referred to the rivers and the sea and has many times alluded to some sort of navigation also. This suggests the development mode of conveyance, transport and trade. The poet has referred to the dresses and ornaments in his descriptions. These references give us a valuable piece of information as regards the social customs. These references embrace citizens as well as her^mmits and give a picture of both the types, urban as well as rural. Thus it is quite necessary to carry on an investigation into these references. The range^u of reference as far as the similes are concerned is thus quite wide and exhaust^uive and the study will give us a realisation of a grand culture which once flourished in our country in the remote past.

^{A simile}
occurring in the Ayodhyākānda refers to a peculiar

custom¹ of the people of the south, Rāma, Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa reached Citrakūṭa. Rama described the deer running speedily. He refers to the people of the south while describing the deer. He says that these deer adorn their heads with fragrant garland of flower like the people of the south who decorate their heads with fragrant garlands of flowers. Here the author seems to refer to a peculiar custom of the south. These southerners used to adorn their heads by winding the garlands of flowers on some festive occasions. The custom must have been prevalent in the age of the Rāmāyana. The author's reference to it suggests the existence of such a custom at that time. One of the beliefs which draw our attention, is regarding the idea about the destruction of the universe at the end of a cosmic period. Generally in India the common people believe that the destruction of the universe will be done by a great flood. A similar expression is given to this belief in the Mah., (III.18 also where Man^{nu}, the progenitor of the human race is described to have collected all the species of the creatures in a great boat according to the instructions of a great fish ^u supposed to be an incarnation of good Viṣṇu in that form, and saved the universe at the time of the great deluge. In the Biblical mythology there is a similar account about Noah's Ark.

But peculiarly enough such references are not found in the Rāmāyana. There is a variety of beliefs regarding the

1. Kurvanti kusumāpīdān srahsu surabhīnamī /
 mṛgha prakā^e sair phalakair dāksinātyā yathā narāh //

the would be destruction of the universe, expressed in the Rāmāyana. The idea frequently referred to regarding this matter is that the universe will be destroyed by a great fire. This has been expressed in many similes in which the fierceness of some person is intended to be described.

The similes¹ containing references to fire in this connection are numerous. In some of these similes the ^{vehem}relaxent personality of some warrior is described whereas in some other similes a dangerous and fatal weapon is described. The main reason for the comparison with the fire destroying the universe appears to be the ^rdasastous and awe-inspiring personality of the person intended to be described because such a fire

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- 1.(i) Sandāhe dhanuṣi śrīmān Rāmaḥ parapurañjayaḥ /
 Yugāntāgnir iva kruddha idam vacanam abravīt//III.64.76
- (ii) Tapyamānam tāthā Rāmam Sītāheranakarsitam /
 Lokānām abhāve yuktaṁ Sāmvartakam ivānalāṁam//III.65.1.
- (iii) Rāmaḥ parabalāṁ ^{ardī}yugāntāgnir ^tivothitah / IV.15.19 ab.
- (iv) Tam dīptam iva Kālāgnim nāgendram iva kopitam/IV.31.31cd.
- (v) Mahim dahati kopena yugāntāgnir ^tivothitah /V.36.13cd.
- (vi) Sa tam samāsādyā harim harī^kṣaṇo yugāntakālāgnim
 iva prajāksayē / V.47. 8^{ab}
- (vii) Dahāmy aham asambhrānto yugāntāgnir iva prajāḥ /
 V.58.157 ab.

is really a very dreadful object even if its existence is merely imagined. The similes in III.64.76, III.65.1, IV.15.19a V.36.13cd, VI.21.25cd and VI.101.38cd refer to Rāma whereas that in IV.31.31cd refers to Lakṣmaṇa and those in V.47.8ab V.58.157ab describe Hanumat. The similes in VI.67.95ab and VI.67.101cd describe Kumbhakarna. The simile given in VI.70.54 describes a demon chief from the party of Devāntīka etc. who fought against Rāma's army, while that in VI.87.10 describes the demon Nikumbha and that in VI.104.11ab describes Rāvaṇa's Śūta. The simile in VI.104.23cd describes Rāvaṇa himself; that in VII.32-40ab describes Saḥasrārjuna, while that in VII.69.32 ab refers to an arrow of Śatrughna to be discharged at the enemies.

(viii) Babhūva Rāmo durdharso yugāntāgnir iva jvalan VI.21.25cd

(ix) Babhakṣa rakṣo yudhi kumbhakarnaḥ,
Prajā yugāntāgnir iva pradīptah /VI.67.95.ab.

(x) Vavarsa śūlāni sutikṣnadamstrah,
Kāto yugāntāgnir iva pravrdhah / VI.67.101cd.

(xi) Gadām ādāya saṅkrudho matto rāksasapuṅgavah
Harin Samabhidudrāva yugāntāgnir iva jvalan //VI.70.54

(xii) Durāsadas' ca sanjajñe parighābharanaprabhah /
Kapinām sa nikumbhāgnir yugāntāgnir ivotthitah //
VI.77.10.

(xiii) Babhūva samvabdhā-taro yugānta iva pāvakah /
VI.101.38 cd.

(xiv) Sadhīmam iva tikṣnāgram yugāntāgnicayopamam.VI.104.11ab.

Instead of believing it to be due to the great flood in which everything on the globe would be merged in to the waters, ~~if~~ it is declared quite unequivocally by these similes that such a universal destruction would be effected by a great fire. If these passages belong to the original ^v version of the Rāmāyana it is quite ⁱ likely that such a belief is prior to the belief in the great, flood, as Rāmāyana is supposed to be earlier than the Mbh. Whatever may be the ultimate conclusion regarding the genuineness of these passages, it may be argued ^{that} ~~with~~ this might have been the popular belief in the age of the Rāmāyana because otherwise its inclusion in so many references becomes inexplicable.

Some other similes give a somewhat different picture of this matter. But it seems that these and such other instances ^a show a slightly different aspect of the same belief. In the same ^{connection} ~~conclusion~~ it may be noted that these similes give a slight idea as to how the same thing could be looked at in different ways. The similes¹ in IV.11.2, V.47.9 and VI.129.47cd refer to

(xv) Utpatantam yugāntāgnim jalāghair iva vāsavaḥ /VI.104.25cd.

(xvi) Prajajvāla mahāghoro yugānta iva pāvakaḥ / V.32.40 ab.

(xvii) Dadṛśuḥ sarvabhūtāni yugāntāgnim ivotthitam /VII.69.32ab

1. (i) Asaṁśayaṁ prajvalitaḥ ⁱ tīkṣṇair ^{m t} marṣāṅgair ^ś śarair /
tvam daheḥ kupito lokān yugānta iva bhāskaraḥ //IV.11.2

(ii) Vicārayan svam ca balaṁ mahābalo /

Yuga kṣaya sūrya ivābhivardhate //V.47.9cd.

(iii) jighānsurḥ iva lokānte sarvāñi lokān vibhāvasuḥ /

VI.129.47cd.

the sun in this connection. The simile in IV.11.2 is a speech of Sugrīva to Rāma in appreciation of his merits and ability to fight. The simile given in V.47.9 refers to prince Akṣa the son of Rāvaṇa sent to capture Hanumat by his father ; and the simile in VI.129.47 cd is a speech of Hanumat to Bharata and refers to Rāma as he was narrating the incidents about Rāma's life to him. All these similes have the sun as the standard of comparison and they can be considered as reflecting the belief of the people in the age of Rāmāyaṇa that the destruction of the universe would be brought about by the sun shining with scorching heat. But one point may here be noted that in this connection the destruction is believed to be happening due to the heat and as such it can be ^{lie}beheld with some probability to be a mere extension of the belief that the destruction ~~ea~~ would be done by the cosmic fire or if interpreted otherwise it may stand as an independent belief suggesting that the people in that age had this two-fold belief regarding the idea about the cosmic disaster^{er}. Whatever may be the case, that much is certain that these similes give an idea as to how the people looked at this question.

There are some other similes¹ also which give some idea regarding the very matter. They can be taken to refer to some

1. (i) nanāda hanumān viro yugānte jalado yathā/V.54.20cd.

(ii) Pragrahya rakṣānsi mahayudhāni

yugāntavātā iva samviceruh /VI.41.160cd.

minor aspects about the universal destruction. Such a destruction cannot be supposed to be effected all of a sudden. It may last for a long period and during that time so many other things may happen. So these similes describe such things happening on that occasion.

The simile in V.54.20cd describes Hanumat and that in VI.41.100cd describes the demons marching to fight against Rāma's army. These similes, though referring to a small thing as regards the belief about the universal destruction, can be taken to add to our knowledge as to how the people of that age viewed this matter.

The idea expressed in the simile contained in V.54.20cd refers to a cloud roaring at the time of the universal destruction. So this may lead to the conclusion that the idea of the universal deluge was also in vogue at that time. But that is not advisable as such a stray reference cannot be taken as a decisive evidence on the strength of which such a conclusion can be arrived at. It can only be taken as a side light on one of the aspects of these matter.

The latter simile in VI.41.100cd describes the belief that the strong gales of wind would blow on the occasion of the universal destruction. So thus it gives an additional information regarding the belief of the people in the age of the Rām. about the universal destruction. Similar is the belief regarding the evil aspects of the falling stars. The poet has

used many similes¹ in which he has taken the falling stars as upa^mhāna.

Thus the similes given in III.52.32 and V.17.20ab refer to Sītā; the simile given in II.114.11cd describes

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- 1.(i) Sā Kosalendra-duhitā vestamānā mahītale /
na bābhrajā rajodhwastā tāreva gagānac cyutā //
II.65.23^c-24^b.
- (ii) Samhrtadyutivistārām tārām iva divas' cyutām / II.114.11cd.
- (iii) tām maholkām ivākāśe dipyamānām svatejasā /
jahārākāśam āviśya sītām vairavanāmujah //III.52.32.
- (iv) tasyās tānyaḥmivarnāni bhūsanāni mahītale /
saghoṣānyavasīryanta ksīnās tārā ivā m barāt //III.52.34
- (v) tato nipatitām tārām cyutām tārām ivāmbharāt /IV.21.ab.
- (vi) Ksīnapunyām cyutām bhumaḥ tārām nipatitām iva/V.17.20ab.
- (vii) divaḥ ksīptām ivolkām tām śaktim ksīptām asangatām/
VI.70.39ab.
- (viii) Sthire tasyorasi vyūdhe parighah śyatadhā krtah/
Viśīryamāṇah sahasā ulkāśatam ivāmbare //VI.77.13.
- (ix) Sa chhinno naikadhā sūto divyahāṭakamanditah /
vyaśīryata maholkeva rāmaḥnārdito bhuvi // VI.79.42.
- (x) Sā papāta tridhā chinna śaktiḥ kāñcanamālī^ani /
svi^asp^hhullingā jvalitā maholkeva divas' cyutā //VI.101.21
- (xi) tat^hvaiva rāvanenāpi pāt^hamānā ^{muhu} ~~umbe~~ muhuh /
arjunorasi nirbhāti gadolkeva mahāgirau //
VII.32.57^c-58^b.

Ayodhya. The simile in IV.21.1ab describes Tārā, the wife of Vālin with a ^vpuss on the word 'Tārā' used in the simile itself. Similarly the similes in VI.70.39ab, VI.77.13, VI.79.42, VI.101.21 and VII.32.57c -58b describe different weapons and missiles discharged towards the enemy by a fighting warrior. The simile given in II.65.23c describes Kausalyā in her unbearable and afflicted condition after Rāma had left for the forests.

Thus in these similes the falling stars have been chosen as upamānas either to show the adverse condition of a person or a thing ; or to show the fierceness of the thing described. This indicates the way in which the people took this phenomenon. Looking to the context^t in which these similes occur it can be judged that the people did not attach the same evil aspect to the phenomenon as the people do at present. But they did believe that a falling star was something unwelcome and also that it had some dreadfulness about it which made the people tremble. So it can be supposed that the ^{om}ill^ominousness about this phenomenon must have been a later development and the dreadfulness about it must be its predecessor if we look to the antiquity of the Rām..

A similar yet peculiar belief is expressed about the moon in two similes¹. They suggest that the moon when not shining

1. (i) rajanyām aprakāśās tu santāpayati candramāḥ /
krṣṇaraktāmsūparyanto lokasaya ivoditah// VI.23.8.

(ii) rajanyām aprakāśāsda santāpayati candramāḥ /
krṣṇaraktāmsūparyanto yathā lokasya saṅkṣaye//

with the usual light becomes a cause of anxiety. She makes the people feel uneasy. Such a moon when her rays are dark and reddish at the end indicates the advent of a common calamity which may destroy the whole population. Thus this sight of the moon was considered as grossly ill-ⁿomissions. The belief has a tinge of peculiarity about the same because usually the sight of the moon is considered as a happy thing. These similes suggest the opposite characteristic of the moon. Of course the poet has given a fully detailed description of the moon in a particular condition which was believed to be a bad sign and ^{as} such the belief referred to here is not contrary to the usual belief about the moon.

These similes give an expression to a belief in the ~~ill-~~^{ominousness} ~~omissions~~ of the moon, which was in vogue in the age of the Rām.¹ Dr.S.N. Vyasa observes "The moon, though not shining at night, burning and rising with dark, red rays, as if intending to exterminate people was also a bad sign." He also seems to support the above view that the moon in such a condition was an ill-omen in the ^{age} ~~eye~~ of the Rām.

A similar belief is found in a² simile which gives the reason for the falling of the stars. The poet here describes the dreadful condition when Śugrīva roared before proceeding

1. Belief in Omens in the Rām. Age. by Dr.S.N.Vyasa, M.A.Ph.d.

Journal of the Oriental Institute vol.2.p.1-8,Baroda.1952-53.

2. Patanti ca khagā bhūmaⁿ ksīnapunyaⁿ iva grahāḥ /

IV.14.21cf.

to fight. On hearing his roaring the birds began to fall like stars or planets falling on the ^earth while describing th~~s~~ the poet assigns a reason for such a fall of the stars. This reason given by the poet ~~to~~ seems to be an expression of the belief of the people in general. If that was not a popular idea the poet might not have given an expression to it here. It appears from this line that the people believed that the stars or the planets attained to th~~is~~ ^{eir} exalted position due to a great stock of meritorious deeds which they amassed in their previous births. But this position high up in the sky, lasts as long as the stock of the meritoria^{ous} ~~ous~~ deeds is not exhausted. As soon as it is consumed they fall down on the earth. Thus the expression given to the above idea suggests the then popular belief about the phenomenon. Whatever may be the explanation of this phenomenon given by the modern ^cscience and astronomy their explanation given here appears to be plaus^{ible} if the mental setting of the people is taken into consideration. Indians are generally believes^r in the law of karman and the life hereafter. That immutable ever abiding law of karman is a convincing justification for so many things which would have otherwise been entirely inexplicable. This simile thus gives an idea of the belief of the people in the age of the Rām. regarding a natural phenomenon. Moreover, this reference shows a synthetic tendency on the part of the people who believed the phenomenon of the falling of the stars to be due to the ^{haust}exp~~ension~~ of merits. In our days the falling of a star is certainly considered as a bad sign where as this reference trying to justify the fall, in

a way wipes out to a certain extent the dreadful effect of an ill-omen which the popular belief has attached to the phenomenon . Thus such references when taken in the proper light serve the purpose of some sort of a remedy for our weakness of a superstitious belief because we are habituated to believe what is given by tradition and if a still older tradition gives a more healthy belief it must be all the more welcome and the same is the case with this reference.

One more belief about the universal destruction is expressed in a simile. It is a description of Kumbhakarna as to how dreadful he appeared to the multitudes of the monkeys in the army of Rāma. The poet says that he appeared to them like the God seen with the danda in his hand at the end of a Yuga when the universe is destroyed. This suggests the belief of the people in this matter. It seems with probability that the former references already discussed above give an idea according to the belief of the people in the age of the Rāmāyana as to what would happen on the occasion of the universal destruction whereas this reference gives the suggestion of the belief as to who would supervise the great and fatal drama of destruction. This reference suggests that God Himself would be there to perform the job of the supervision of that destruction with the danda in his hand which must be the symbol of justice.

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1. Vipulaparighvān sa kumbhakarṇo
 ripu nidhanāya vinihsrto mahātmā /
 Kapigana-bhayam ādadat subhīman,
 prabhur iva kiṅkardandavān yugānte // VI.65.57.

In a simile¹ given in the yuddha kāṇḍa, one more aspect of the belief about the total destruction of the universe is found to have been expressed. The idea in this simile is related to the belief that the universe will be destroyed by a great, all embracing fire at the end of a yuga. It is said about Laṅkā encircled by fire. The poet has compared the city to the earth at the time of destruction of the world. It is said in this simile that the earth would be resplendent and burning on the occasion of the destruction of the world. This seems to be an expression given to the belief commonly prevalent among the people in that age. Just as according to the belief that such a destruction would be done by great floods it is believed that the earth will be plunged into deep waters, similarly it is here predicted that the world will be destroyed by a fire.

Thus this simile gives an additional proof for the conclusion that in the Rāmāyana instead of the idea of the destruction by the great floods, the destruction by the great universal fire has been clearly expressed.

In another simile² one more aspect of the same belief is expressed. It refers to Rāma enraged at the unhappy incident of the abduction of Sītā. The idea has been given in a simile

1. Lokasyāsyā ksāye ghore

pradīpteva vasundharā / VI. 75.30 ab.

2. Viksamānam dhanuḥ sajjam niḥśvasantam punaḥ punaḥ/

daghdhukāman jagat sarvaṃ yugānte tu yathā Haram// II.65.2

in which the ⁿeraged appearance of Rāma has been compared to that of God Hara or S'aṅkara ready to destroy the world at the end of a yuga. In many other similes referring to the destruction of the world some other agencies working ~~th~~ for this dreadful ^afeet have been referred to. In this connection usually Agni has been ^{ud}allowed to and then in a descending order of importance other deities and phenomena have been named. They are the meteors, roaring clouds, the sun, God Himself and such other entities. Here in this simile Hara is referred to in this connection. This shows that this also must have been a belief current among the people in the age of the Rāmāyaṇa. In the later mythology of the Purāṇas which represent the ⁿtrinity of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Mahes'vara for the actions of creation sustenance and destruction respectively of the universe, god S'aṅkara is always referred to as the destroyer of the universe. There does not seem such a belief in this simile expressed as an established principle. At the most it can be concluded that this simile gives just one more entity responsible as an agency for the destruction of the universe because here this work has not been expressed as a task being exclusively allotted to god S'aṅkara. A belief regarding the fate of the world has been expressed in a simile¹ in the uttara-kāṇḍa. The reference is to the fight between god Viṣṇu and the demon Mālin. The poet says that the arrows

1. Īathā rakṣo-dhanur muktā vajrānilamanojavāh /,
hariṃ viśanti sma sārā lokā iva viparyage // VII.74.

shot from the bow of the demon entered the body of god Viṣṇu like the worlds entering the body of god Viṣṇu at the universal destruction. The suggestion appears to be that the belief expressed here is that the worlds merge into the body of god Viṣṇu on the occasion of the total annihilation. We can also conclude that the belief did prevail in the age of the Rāmāyana as it has found expression here. It must be noted that the simile given here furnishes a stage prior to the development of the later Purānic mythology wherein the three fold work of creation, maintenance and destruction of the universe had been distributed to god Brahmā, Viṣṇu and S'aṅkara respectively. If such a clear notion about it was prevalent instead of the word 'Hari' in the stanza 'Hara' would have been mentioned. Moreover here the 'Hari' has two-fold implication by one it refers to god Viṣṇu actually as he was fighting with the demon Maṅgala; and by the other it refers to god Viṣṇu again as the principle responsible for the destruction of the universe.

It seems that the reference in this simile may represent an earlier stage of the development of Viṣṇu as supreme God. Here, it can be seen that in the Rāmāyana Viṣṇu's conception as the deity strictly looking after the maintenance of the universe has not been referred to as the only trait of his character. He has been ascribed the work of destruction also. Thus this simile describing the world getting itself merged into god Viṣṇu is important as far as it marks a stage in the development regarding the ultimate deification of Viṣṇu as the supreme god, seen in the later Vaiṣṇavite Purānas. One more belief

about the destruction ² of the world is expressed by a simile¹ in which god Brahmā has been assigned this dreadful duty of destroying the world. The description refers to Laṅkā which had been burnt by Hanumat. The poet here compares the city with the earth being devastated by the wrath of god Brahmā. In the later mythology of the Purāṇas Brahmā is invariably described as the principle responsible for the creation of the world. But this simile describes Brahmā as having destroyed the world due to his wrath. Thus the description given here puts forth a striking contrast with the belief which is popular and which is based on the purāṇic mythology. So this reference which describes this deity in altogether a different light is important as it shows the stage in the history of the belief about the destruction of the world when Brahmā, the later on recognised as a principle responsible for creation had been ascribed the work of destruction of the world also. This suggests that at the time of the Rāmāyana the character of the god Brahmā was not strictly fixed and clear as it is seen in the period of the Purāṇas.

Now just associated with the idea and belief about the destruction of the universe is the conception about death expressed in the Rāmāyana. On many occasions the author has expressed the belief about death regarding its form generally conceived by the people of the age. Firstly death has been conceived of as being in the form of fire and the world usually

^{Laṅkā}
1. Dadars' a Hanmān Mahāmanāh,
Svayambhū^hṭkopopahatām ivāvanim / V.54.44 Cd.

employed by the author in this connection is Kālāgnī. The similes which refer to the destruction of the universe also express the belief that there will be a universal fire at the time of the total destruction. So it seems that these similes¹ which express the belief in which death is conceived of as having the form of the fire depict an idea which is just a different aspect of the same belief.

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1. (i) Kālāgnī sadrasah Krodhe, I. 1.18. C.
 - (ii) Vidhūmam iva Kālāgnim, I.55.28a
 - (iii) Vidhūma-iva Kālāgnir I.56.19a.
 - (iv) Kālāgnī^v iva sandīptah prāvardhat t^hutāsanaḥ /
V.54.21cd.
 - (v) Sa dīpta iva Kālāgnir jagvālābhī^rmukhaḥ Kha^rjam/
V.67.12 cd.
 - (vi) Kālāgnir iva jajvā^tta krodhena paravīrahā / VI.59.76cd.
 - (vii) Cacāra ha^risainyesu Kālāgnir iva m^urⁱchitah /VI.67.38cd.
 - (viii) Sa rāksasānām tat saⁿnyam kālāgnir iva nirdahaⁿ /VI.86.19ab
 - (ix.) Kālāgnir iva sa^uṅkr^udho yām yām disam avai^sata /VI.93.25cd.
 - (x) tato Krudho dasagrīvaḥ kālāgnir iva nirgataḥ /
VII.23.43 cd.
 - (xi) Kālāgnī^{re}eva gho^{re}ṇa tapteneva Mahārcisā /
VII.85.14 ab.

All these similes describe death in the form of fire and they express the belief of the people regarding death. The point emphasized in such similes is simply the dreadful-ness of the person or the weapon intended to be described. Related to this belief regarding the death is the belief about the god of death. Usually god Yama is referred to in this connection. Yama has been traditionally known and recognised as being the god of death or a principle presiding over the activity of destruction. The belief regarding Yama as the god of death is pretty old. So it is quite natural that he must have been referred to here in this epic. But that is not the entire belief. The similes¹

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- I
- (i) Vināśakāmāṃ ^hapītam amitrām
 āvāsayam mṛtyu mivātman ^tas tvām /II.12.107 cd.
- (ii) Kaḥ samartho 'dhikam kartum kṛtāntasy eva tiṣṭhatah/II.21.9.c
- (iii) Sa vinadya mahānādam sūlam udyamya rāksasah /
 pragṛahyāśobhata tadā vyāttānana ivāntakah //III.3.14.
- (iv) Abhyadhāvat saṅkrudhah prayāh kāta ivāntakah/III.2.9ab.
- (v) Pravṛddham ^manyus tu kharah kharasvano,
 ripor vadhārtham ^tvarito yathāntakah/III.22.26 ab.
- (vi) Abdhadhāvata kākutstham krudho rudram ^{ivān}antakah/
 III.25.31 cd.
- (vii) dādrśuh sarāvabhūtāni pāsahastam ^{iv}antakah/ III.28.11 cd.
- (viii) parāyāpto'ham gadāpāni ^hhantum prānān ^rane tava/
 trayānām api lokānām pāsahasta ivāntakah/ III.29.22
- (ix) Rudreneva viniy ^tdagdhah s'vetāranye yathāntakah/
 III.30.27.cd.

in which ^Yyama or the god of death is referred to describe him in full details giving a picture as conceived by the people regarding the personally and form of this deity. That picture is really interesting. Some of these similes refer to death or the god of death in general while some similes try to

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- (x) grhitadhanuṣam Rāmam pāśahastam ivāntakam^m/III.39.15ab.
- (xi) Vidravanti bhayād bhītā mṛtyor iva sadā prajāh/III.48.3cd.
- (xii) S'akrabānāsanapōrakhyam dhanuh kā^tāntakōpamam/IV.31.11 ab.
- (xiii) tad eva vīrah parigrāhya toraṇam
Kṛtakṣaṇah kā^ta iva prajāksaye/V.46.40 cd.
- (xiv) Tadeva vīro'bhijagāmatōraṇam kṛtakṣaṇah
kā^ta iva prajāksaye /V.47.38 cd.
- (xv) Krudham mṛtyum ivāsīnam prabodhayitumicchati/VI.13.17 cd
- (xvi) Cacāra lokasamhāre pāśahasta ivāntakah/VI.53.25cd.
- (xvii) tam antakam iva krudham samare prāṇahāriṇim^a/VI.56.24ab
- (xviii) bhūtaḥ parivṛtas tīkṣṇair dehavadbhir ivāntakah.
VI.59.30 cd.
- (xix) Kas tam mṛtyum, ivāsahyam āsādayitum arhati/VI.64.15cd.
- (xx) tad gaccha sūlam ādāya pāśahasta ivāntakah/ VI.65.13ab.
- (xxi) vajrahasto yathā S'akraḥ pāśahasta ivāntakah /
VI.67.39 ab.
- (xxii) pragrhitāyudhasyeva^m mṛtyor iva mahāmṛdhe/VI.67.109ab.
- (xxiii) raktāsya nayanah krudho babhā^uṇi mṛtyur ivāntakah/
VI.86.16cd.
- (xxiv) tam antakam iva krudham carācara cikhādisum/
VI.83.26 cd.

describe him. The first and the foremost characteristic of death referred to in these similes is its fury. Surely death is not at all a happy occurrence and as such no feeling other than anger could be ascribed to it. In this connection the word 'Kruddhah' is frequently used in the Epic, or at times of her synonymous words like 'pravrdhamanyuh' etc. are used. Now as regards the description of the form of the god of death very interesting beliefs are found in these similes. In the simile given in III.3.14 it is described that death has its mouth wide open. In connection with the anger of death the simile given in VI.86.16 cd describes that its eyes as well as face are extremely red. This description very clearly reveals the popular belief about death, current among the illiterate masses even at present. Thus this simile is important from the point of view of ancient beliefs.

Then, in this connection the most frequent epithet used for death is 'pāsahastah' which also expresses the popular belief about it. It is generally believed that Yama, drags the five prānas out of the body, by the pas'as kept in his hands. The other epithet is 'Kṛtakṣanah' which shows the characteristic of determination in this principle. It means that the activity of death is a determined and planned course of action.

(xxv) Kṛtānta iva cāvāryo nyapatak rāvanorasi /

VI.III.17 cd.

(xxvi) gadayā gaṇḍeśānam īśānam iva cāntakah /

VI.7.38.cd.

The words prajānām 'Kṣayah' used in these similes suggest the destruction on a large scale. The simile given in VI.59.30 cd describes that death is ^usurrounded ⁿand attended upon by different spirits having bodies. Perhaps this may mean that yama might have been ^{ou}surrounded by yama ^uditas.

A general survey of all these similes shows that the belief about the form of the god of death, as expressed in the Rāmāyana seems to be more crude and primary and the elaborate details which can be seen as described in the Purānic mythology are conspicuous by their absence.

A belief in a bad omen is described in a simile¹ occurring in the yuddha kāṇḍa when kumbhakarna set out to fight against the army of Rāma, the poet describes many ill omens witnessed by kumbhakarna. He describes things like the birds turning left and making a circle, throbbing of the left arm, the yelling of the donkeys and cries of the female jackals. In this very context he describes an ill-omen by this simile. He says that when Kumbhakarna proceeded to the battle field a vulture fell on his path like a garland falling from above. If a vulture fell like a garland from above it was considered a bad sign. Thus this simile gives an insight into an important belief in ^{om}omens prevalent in the age of the Rāmāyana. When we consider the present conditions prevailing in our country

1. nisrapāta ca māteva graḥro'sya pathi gacchatah/,

we can easily find that such beliefs in ill-omens are current in our society even at present.

A similar belief in the illomen is expressed in another simile¹ which refers to the sun. Dr² S.N.Vyas observes as follows: "A dark circle boarded with red, resembling that of a charcoal, appearing in the vicinity of the sun was a sign of ensuing adverse fate." Dr.Vyasa is no doubt right. The demon khara proceeded to fight against Rāma and these omens were witnessed by him and his followers. The poem here gives many details like this. The simile here gives one of them. The sun when shining brightly it is surely the sign of good things, but when there is a dark and red circle around it, it shows sure signs of something bad to take place in the near future. That very thing has been expressed here in this simile which shows the belief of the people of about the sun in that condition. It is usually the human nature to find support and justification for good and bad events in the human life in his surroundings and the nature which is always before a man. This belief expressed here is a result of such a tendency. We get an insight into the tendency of the people in the age of the Rām.

1. śyāmaṃ rudhir^a paryantaṃ babhū^ūva parvieṣaṇam /,
alātacakrapratim^{ma} pra^{ra}tigṛhya divākaram // III.23.3.

2. Belief in omens in the Rāmāyana Age"

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In the same context the poet has expressed one more sign of ill-omen by a simile¹. This simile expresses a belief about the clouds. It seems from this description of the clouds that the clouds in a special condition as described here are a sign of ill-omen. It is suggested that the clouds when they are quite big in size like that of a mountain pierced in itself and having blood in the form of water, they are signs of ensuing calamity. The poet here describes the effect of such clouds. They covered the whole region of the sky and made it 'Anākāśam' that is to say due to their very covering they changed the whole sky. Thus these clouds created an atmosphere of gloom and sorrow. It is our common experience also that we feel uneasy eventhough there is nothing bad to happen, when the sky is covered with black and thick clouds enormous in size, for a longer time.

Similarly there were beliefs about a particular time also. In a simile² occurring in the yuddhakāṇḍa, the poet gives an idea about evening in this connection, of its being a sign of a bad omen. He suggests here that when the sky appeared extremely

1. prabhinnagirisāṅkāśās toysonitadhāinaḥ /

Ākāśam tad anākāśam cakrur bhīmā balāhakaḥ // III.23.7.

2. rakta candanasāṅkāś'ā,

sandhyā paramadārungā / VI.41.15 ab.

reddish like the red sandal wood, it was a bad sign of an adverse fate. Here Sugrīva describes to Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa the conditions and ill-omens which are sure signs of a bad and disastrous fate for their enemy. He refers to evening also in this connection. But he simply gives vent to a belief popularly known to the people of that age.

One more belief in an ill-omen regarding the fire is seen in a simile¹ occurring in the Sundarakāṇḍa. Hanumat, after finding out the where Sītā had been kept as a captive in Laṅkā by Rāvāna and conveying Rāma's message to her, returned to the monkeys waiting for his return. They were very glad to see Hanumat returned after his successful undertaking. So many chiefs of Sugrīva's army were also there waiting for him. Out of them Jāmbavat, the bear chief and warrior in Sugrīva's army asked Hanumat to relate all that he witnessed and experienced at Laṅkā. While narrating his experiences and referring to Sītā he uses the simile. He referred to Rāvāna's approach to Aśoka-vanikā and his proposals made to Sītā who quite vehemently opposed him and flatly refused to submit to him. She deprecated him in very harsh words. Hanumat uses this simile to describe the effect of Sītā's unfavourable attitude towards him. He was present on the occasion. He said that when Rāvāna was thus repudiated by Sītā, he became extremely enraged and shone all

1. Jānakyā parusaṃ vākyam evam ukto daśānanaḥ /
jajvāta sahasā kopāc citās̄tha iva pāvakaḥ //

of a sudden like the fire burning in a funeral pyre. Here the personal lustre and anger are the points emphasised by the poet. But this was the impression of a devotee of Rāma to whom Rāvaṇa was a person fit to be condemned. So naturally he compared him to the fire burning in a funeral pyre. Thus showing that the form of Rāvaṇa was fit to be condemned because otherwise he might have been compared to some other fire. This further shows that the people believed such fire to be an object of disgust just like the people of the present times to whom such fire is surely inauspicious.

Just as the beliefs regarding ill omens can be referred to while describing tragic scenes it is quite likely that the beliefs regarding good omens can be alluded to while delineating happy situations as a sort of suggestion for ^{om} ~~cing~~ happy events. The author of the Rām. does refer to such beliefs and while doing so he has used some important similes which throw light on the belief of the people regarding good signs as suggestions of the happy occurrences in future. In the Sundara kāṇḍa after the unconditional demand of Rāvaṇa for the submission of Sītā, and his consequent entrusting Sītā to the care of demonesse who were ordered to bring her round for becoming willing to accept Rāvaṇa's proposals, Trijaṭā one of the demonesse taking care of Sītā describes the happy dream which she had the previous night. She described how bright the future of Sītā was, as visioned by her dream. She also described at length the terrible fate of Rāvaṇa and his allies who were destined to

be doomed. Then she proceeded to describe the good and welcome effects of good hopes on Sītā. In doing so, she uses similes which describe suggestively the popular belief regarding good omen. She says, ¹ "Her eye which is wide like a petal of ^a lotus is seen throbbing, the left part of this gentle lady appears to be pleased a little, accidentally one arm of Vaidehī throbs and the left thigh of Sītā which is like the trunk of a she-elephant while being trembling suggest as ^{if} Rāma himself were present here." Here Trijatā enumerates the signs of good fortune for Sītā in future by taking into consideration the throbbing of her eye, arm and thigh. In this description of Sītā the author has used similes and they give us the suggestions regarding the belief of the people. It was believed from very old times as it seems from the antiquity of the references that the throbbing of the different limbs of the human body was considered as a sign of good omen.

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1. Drśyate ca sphurat cakṣuḥ padmapatram ivāyatam /
 īśacca hr̥ṣito vāsyā dakṣiṇāyā hyadakṣiṇaḥ //
 akasmād eva Vaidehyā bāhur ekaḥ prakampate /
 kareṇuhastapratimaḥ savyas' corur anuttamaḥ //
 vepamānaḥ sūcayati Rāghavam purataḥ sthitam /

It is also worth noting that the throbbing of the limbs in the left part of the body in case of a woman was considered a good sign and conversely it can also be presumed that the throbbing of the limbs in the right part in case of a man must have been considered as a sign of good omen; as is suggested by the throbbing of the right arm to Dusyanta¹ as he entered the penance grove. The reference in the Abhijñāna-Sākuntalam just shows how commonly such belief was prevalent among the people in ancient India. The enumeration of the good signs done here by Trijatā refers to the throbbing in case of a woman and hence she refers to the throbbing of the eye, arm and thigh in the left part of Sītā's body; similarly the author devotes the whole canto viz. V.29 to describe the good signs witnessed by Sītā herself. In this canto also he uses similes² which bear testimony to the belief of the people regarding good signs suggesting a future

1. Sāntam idam āśramapadam sphurati ca bāhuh kutah phalam
ihāsyā /
Athavā bhavātavyānām bhavanti dvārāni sarvatra //
Abhijñāna-Sākuntalam, I.16.

2. (i) Tathāgatām vyathitām aninditām,
Vyapataharsām paridinamānasām /
Subhām nimittāni bhejire
Naram śriyā juṣtam ivopajivinaḥ // V.29.1.

happy occurrence in case of a woman. In these similes also the author has referred to the throbbing of the ^mlibs in case of a woman.

In V.29.1 the poet very vividly brings out how Sītā witnessed the good signs. The author suggests that by employing a very beautiful simile. These good signs attended on Sītā like the servants attending on their wealthy master. Then he takes up the signs one by one and describes them. In V.29.2 he describes the throbbing of the left eye in a very beautiful manner. He tells us that the eye of Sītā throbbed like a lotus which throbs on account of the fish moving near it. The simile given in V.29.4 repeats

(ii) Tasyā śubham vānam arālapakṣma rājīvṛtam kṛṣṇa
visālasūklam /
prāspendataikam nayanam sukesyā
mīnāhatam padmam ivābhiṣāmram // V.29.2.

(iii) Gajendrahastapratimasā pīnas
tayor dvayoḥ samhatayoḥ sujātaḥ /
praspaṇḍamānaḥ punar ūrurasyā
Rāmaṁ purastāt sthitam ācacakṣe // V.29.4

(iv) Śubham punar hema samānavarnam
īśad rajodhvastam ivāmakakṣyāḥ /
vāsaḥ sthitāyāḥ śikharāgradatyāḥ
kiñcit parisraṇā sata cārugaṭṛyāḥ //
V.29.5

almost ~~repeats~~ verbatim the idea given in V.27.49; and describes the throbbing of the left eye of Sītā. Here also the thigh has been compared to the trunk of an elephant. In V.27.49 and here the sign described as a suggestion of good fortune appears to be very decisive one as at both the places it is said that the sign indicated as if Rāma were present near Sītā. There is really speaking no question about Rāma's being physically present. But it may be presumed that the people might have believed that the throbbing of the thigh in case of a woman must be a good omen for her ensuing good fortune, because nearness of Rāma fancied here cannot be ^x explained in any other way. So it appears to be a sign of good fortune more distinctly, destined to assume the shape of reality. The simile given in V.29.5 does add to our knowledge regarding the belief in good omens suggested by the throbbing of the limbs in case of a woman. Here in this simile it is suggested that the garment of Sītā which was similar to gold in colour and which was covered partly by dust was just fallen off. This is taken as a good sign. But it appears from the stanza that it refers to the effect and not to the cause that is to say that the falling off of the garment must have been due to ~~ka~~ the movement caused by the tremor and shivering due to the throbbing. So that also suggests the good sign.

Thus these similes give valuable information regarding the belief in good omens, current in the age of the Rām.

The Rām. does not contain merely beliefs in omens. There are so many other kinds of beliefs also pertaining to other walks of life. These ~~are~~ beliefs as far as the similes are concerned give an expression to the ~~populatio~~ belief in a sort of comparison. Among these beliefs some philosophical postulates and hypothetical axioms^m are also stated and as such they are important for the historical study of the development of such principles. The Rām. being an epic having literary as well as national importance and significance, the development displayed in it is really a matter of interest and is noteworthy.

In a simile¹ in Ayodhyākānda there is a reference to the famous law of Karma. when Kaikeyī put forth her demands to the king Daśaratha, he was deeply grieved to find how Kaikeyī's attitude was disastrous^u. So in this stanza he gives vent to his reactions against Kaikeyī's proposals. Daśaratha says, "Oh what a misery and what a

1. Aho dukham aho kṛcchram yatra vācaḥ kṣame tava /
dukham evamvidham prāptam purākṛtam ivāsubham //

danger it is if I accept your words, by which this sort of misery has befallen like a misdeed done previously ! " Here the king clearly refers to the unfailing law of Karman. His reference is to the principle of the fruit occurring in case of a Karman. Of course here he refers to a misdeed and the ^daverse result of it accrued as a fruit of that misdeed. But conversely it can be presumed that regarding the result of a good and ²meritorious action accruing as a fruit of such an acton, must have also been an established principle in that age. From the stanza containing this simile it can be concluded that the people believed in the infallibility and efficiency of the Karman. Here at least the belief in its inevitable fruit is clearly expressed. This principle has been elaborately propounded in the Bhagvad Gitā, but we can find here that the belief in this law of Karman had acquired a considerable hold on the people.

A similar belief in the unshakability of the principle that the higher worlds can be attained by good and ^{hi}meritorious actions is expressed in a simile¹ occurring

1. Prahasta rājā ca Mahodaras' ca

tvam kumbhakarnas' ca yadārtha jātam /,

Bravītha Rāman prati tan na sākyaṃ,

yathā gatiḥ svargam adha^{ym} buddhaḥ //

^ VI.14.10.

in the Yuddha-kānda Vibhīṣana, in this stanza tells Prahasta how the proposals made by himself, Rāvana and Kumbhakarna in connection with the course of action against Rāma were impossible. To suggest that impossibility in more clear terms he uses a simile. He refers to the principle that good and auspicious regions like heaven can be attained not by those who are disbelievers and atheists devoid of any inclination towards religion. That means a clear reference to a belief that such higher regions can be attained only by those who perform good and meritorious deeds. Here he clearly says that a person whose intellect, is impure not at all believing in religion and ~~and~~ meritorious action can never attain to the heaven.

It is a sheer impossibility. Thus in this simile Vibhīṣana refers to the problem of the soul's attainment ^{to} of a suitable region according to merits or demerits. This shows clearly that in the age of the Rāmāyana belief regarding the soul's attainment ^{to} of different regions according to the merits and demerits performed during the life was prevalent among the people.

A similar belief about the condition of the soul has been described in a simile¹ in the Uttarakānda. Here

1. tena cakrena Mārico Viṣṇuneva rane hatah /
patito bhūtale sailāt kṣapunya ivāmarāt //

the fall of a demon on account of a severe wound is described. The poet compares the demon with a soul attaining to the higher regions on account of its merit and falling down to the mortal world after the stock of good and meritorious actions is exhausted. The simile given here suggests that the people believed firmly in the law of Karman and the achievement of the fruit according to it. Here also it is clearly suggested that the soul attains to higher regions due to the meritorious actions and continues to stay there^u as long as the stock of such actions last. But as soon as the stock is exhausted he falls down invariably. Thus the simile clearly expresses the belief of the people in the age of the Rām. as regards the attainment^{to} of the different higher or lower regions according to the merits or otherwise of the the person concerned. The belief expressed here seems to be exactly corresponding with that expressed in the Bhagwad Gītā¹ which also propounds that the soul attains to the higher worlds owing to the punya accumulated and retains there as long as the stock is there and then^p returns to the mortal world as soon as the stock is exhausted.

1. te tam bhuktvā svargalokam viśālam /
ksīne puny@ martgalokam viśanti //

A simile¹ given in the Kiṣkindhā-Kāṇḍa is also worth noting regarding the belief about the soul's attaining to the higher regions. In this simile the belief expressed is that the persons who are pure at heart and who have performed good deeds only attain to the heaven. The simile very clearly puts forth the conditions for attaining to the heaven. The first requirement is the purity of heart because that is the real characteristic of a good person. Then secondly the person must have performed good deeds. If these two conditions are fulfilled the attainment of heaven is quite easily guaranteed. The common people in India do believe this even to-day. In fact Indian masses are deeply influenced by the belief and faith in the heaven and hell. The belief very naturally leads to the unshakable faith in the efficacy of the law of Karman and its results. Here in this stanza it is stated that persons who are pure at heart and who perform good actions are the only rightful persons entitled to the bliss of residence in heaven. Just as the simile given in VI.14.10 expresses the belief that the persons not leading their life in accordance with religion do not attain to heaven, it being impossible for them to ascend to it, similarly this simile expresses the belief

1. rājabhir dhṛtadandās tu kṛtvā pāpāni mānavāh /
nirmalāḥ svargam āyānti santah sukṛtino yathā //

as to who can attain to heaven and on what conditions. It becomes all the more important as it expresses just the belief which people profess even at present and as such is an evidence of the great popularity of such a belief.

The important belief regarding the death of a person is expressed in a simile¹ occurring in the uttara-kānda. The stanza containing this simile refers to the allies of Rāma. They participated in the coronation of Rāma and then they returned to their respective places. The poet uses the simile to describe their return. He uses 'soul' as upamāna. He seems to describe the condition after the soul's departure from the body. He says that all persons after being accorded with favourable gifts by Rāma went to their places like the soul leaving the body. Thus here the poet describes death. When a person dies what actually happens is that the body remains and the soul departs, deserting the body to the mortal world. The simile also describes the belief of the people that it is the soul that departs and the body is the only remnant after its departure. The same is believed throughout the ages in

1. kṛtaprasādās tenaivam rāghaveṇa mahātmanā /

jagmuḥ svam svam grham sarve dehī deham iva tyajaṃ //

India wherein the religious principles expound the immortality of soul and also the doctrine of transmigression. Here we find an expression given to such a belief in the age of the Rām. and as such the simile is really important.

The belief about the invisibility of the soul was also current in the age of the Rām. It may be due to the development in the philosophical speculations made by different philosophers who might have preceded the age in which the Rām. was written. We see many such trends of development in the upaniṣads. There the nature of the soul has been discussed from various points of view. Here the suggestion of a belief about the nature of the soul is expressed in a simile¹. The stanza refers to Rāma. He discharged such an incessant volley of arrows and weapons on all sides, that no body could see him. To express how Rāma became invisible to them, the poet takes the Bhūtātman as the upamāna. It appears from the trend of the stanza that the word Bhūtātman can easily be understood to signify an individual soul. The poet, here seems to suggest that the soul is not visible, although it resides in the body, and the very connection between the sense organ and its object is due to its presence.

1. praharantam śarṅgeṣu na te paśyanti rāghavam /
indriyārtheṣu tiṣṭhantam bhūtātmanam iva prajāh //

so its existence can be felt or inferred; it cannot be cognised by direct perception. The simile here, thus gives a proof of the existence of such a belief about the nature of the soul as understood by the people in the age of the Rām.

The author of the Rām. has alluded to other beliefs also in his similes. They suggest the popular beliefs which were commonly current among the people. One such belief regarding the earth and its shape is found to have been expressed in a simile¹ occurring in the Sundara-kānda. The simile represents the picture of Rāvana as seen by Hanumat when he was presented before the King of the demons. Here of course there is not much similarity between the upameya and upamāna. Simply the fact that Rāvana was surrounded by four mighty demon warriors have led the author to use this simile. But in this simile a very clear notion about the world as conceived by the people has been given. The simile here suggests that the people believed that the world was square in shape and there were four seas on the sides. This belief is really interesting and noteworthy as it reflects one of the most primitive beliefs. The wide and far-reaching expanse of the earth must have led the people to believe

1. kṛtsnam parivratam lokam caturbhiḥiva sāgaraiḥ /

that the earth was square in shape. Such a belief is found not only in the Rām. but also in many other works which have enriched the Sanskrit literature. In the Abhiñāna Śākuntalam¹ for instance the stage Kanva blesses Śākuntalā that she would be a co-wife to the earth which has four ends that is it had four sides, meaning that she would be the queen of the king Duśyanta who would rule the earth, which had four sides. This also gives the same belief as is expressed in the simile.

The author of the Rām. has used many similes referring to the various details of a sacrifice. In so many similes² he has expressed the idea that in the sacrifices the fire was enkindled and ghee - Ājya was offered to it as an

1. bhūtvā cirāya caturantama^tḥisapanī /
Abhiñāna-Śākuntalam. IV.20a.

2. (i) Śhūta iva makhe^gvir ājyasiktah,

Samabhad ujjavalito maharṣivanhiḥ / I.20.2cd.

(ii) rāksasīnām vacah S'rtvā Rāvano vākṣaseśvarah/
hutā^vgair iva jajvāla kopasam^vartiteksanah //

V.42.22.

(iii) samutpapāta sadasy udīrito,

dvi-jātīmukhyaiḥ haviṣeva pāvakah /

V.47.2cd.

oblation and consequently it burnt all the more, its flames being more resplendent. The simile given in I.20.2cd contains a definite reference to ghee being offered in the fire. The other similes also describe the fire shone more brightly when oblations were offered in plenty. The second simile describes the fire to suggest the anger of Rāvana that is to say that the anger of Rāvana was so much increased like the fire to which the oblations have been offered. Here also the idea that the fire is increased when oblations are offered has been expressed, which fact shows nothing but the prevalence of the cult of the sacrifice on a very wide scale. If that were not so the author might have used some other simile to describe the ~~author~~ increase of the anger. The third simile given in V.47.2cd describes the rising flow of vigour and enthusiasm felt by prince Akṣa, the son of Rāvana on hearing the wretched

॒. (iv) Kumbhakarno brhatkarnah suhūtoḡair ivābahaḡ /

VI.65.29ab.

(v) paśyatas tām tu rāmasya bhūyah krodho vyavardhata/
prabhū tājyāvasiktasya pāvakasyeva dīpyataḡ //

VI.118.11

(vi) Sa tu vaiśraṡanas tatra tapovanagatas tadā /
avardhātāhutihuto mahātejā yathā malah //

VII.3.9

destruction by Hanumat in the Asokavanikā. The simile suggests how the sacrifices were performed. It appears that special sessions were arranged for the performance of a sacrifice. Many learned Brahmins were engaged for the ritualistic ceremonies to work as officiating priests. These learned Brahmins used to offer the oblations in the fire and consequently the fire burnt with increased flames. So this simile marks a stage in the history of the sacrificial cult in which several priests were employed for the orderly performance of a sacrifice. The fifth simile given in VI.118.11 describes the increase in the anger of Rāma in the same way in which the simile in V.42.22 describes the anger of Rāvana being increased. Here also it is stated that Rāma's anger increased itself like the fire in which profuse ghee had^s been poured as an oblation. This and the simile given in I.20.27cd suggest that the ghee had been considered as a principal oblation. The simile given in VII.3.9 describes the lustre of Kubera increased by the determination of launching upon severe penances to get the boons from Brahmā. Here, the author describes the increasing lustre of Kubera in terms of a sacrifice. His lustre was enhanced and exhilarated like the fire in which oblations had^s been offered. In fact all such references go to prove that the sacrifices must have been performed on a large scale.

The author has used similes¹ in which he has described the construction of the sacrificial altar. The importance of the sacrificial altar was great. As the cult of the sacrifice was greatly prevalent in the country the references to the altar also occur with a considerable ^{frequency} references in this epic. From these references we get a clear idea about the sacrificial altar constructed in that remote past when the sacrifices were performed. It must have been built by the use of wet clay as the suggestion from the word ^mardu would have as believe. The simile in II.99.19 describes that the altar was wide and broad, and the Kusá grass was scattered on all the sides of it. Similarly the simile given in III.26.34ab the altar has been described as being strewn with kusá grass on all the sides. The

1.(i) Sālatālasva Karnānām parñair bahubhir āvrtām /
Viśātām mrduvistīrnām kusair vedim ivādhvare //

II.99.19.

(ii) Sutyākāle vinirvrtte vedim gataravām iva /

II.114.8 cd.

(iii) āstīrnā vasudhā krtsnā mahāvedih kusair iva /

III.26.34.ab.

(iv) Vedim iva parāmrstām,

V. 19.14a.

simile given in V.19.14a suggests that the altar was cleansed as the word *parāmr̥stām* signifies. The simile given in II.114.18cd describes Ayodhyā as seen by Bharata on his return from Citrakūta. The simile refers to the time after the pressing of soma is completed. It appears from the description that the tools used for such a pressing viz. the stone for pounding the leaves of the soma and the slab of stone on which the pressing was done must have been noisy while the process of pressing was going on. It is described here that the altar near which such a pressing was done remained quite devoid of noise after that pressing was finished. Thus this simile suggests that during a sacrificial performance the pressing of soma was done near the sacrificial altar and it was done with the help of some instruments like the stones for pressing. This really exactly corresponds with the description of the pressing of soma occurring in the hymns of the Ṛgveda addressed to Soma. So it is quite interesting to find how the practice was in vogue during the period in which the Rāma- was composed.

The author refers to the various ^ecremonies also which were supposed to have been performed during the session of a sacrifice.

In a simile occurring in the Ayodhyā Kānda he refers to the ceremony of circumambulations round the sacrificial fire. The simile ~~a similar~~ compares a situation with a similar practice in a sacrifice. Suyajña, a son of Vasistha happened to visit Rāma. He with his hands folded out of reverence to the son of his family priest, Together with Sītā he circumambulated the learned Brahmin. The author refers to the practice of circumambulating the sacrificial fire in this connection. He says that Rāma, together with Sītā circumambulated Suyajña like a sacrificer turning round a sacrificial altar with his folded hands, together with his wife who is also a partner in the religious ceremonies. So this simile describes how that ceremony was performed. The sacrificer got up from his seat, his wife accompanied at this time. He folded his hands and then walked turning round the sacrificial fire which was worshipped already by offering the holy oblations. This ceremony had to be performed jointly by the sacrificer and his wife, as is suggested by the description given in this simile. Thus this simile¹ gives a valuable information about an important ceremony in a sacrifice.

1. tam āgatam vedavidam prāñjaliḥ sītayā Saha /
suyajñam abhicakrāma rāghavogṇim ivārcitam //

Similarly in a simile¹ in the Yuddha Kānda the ceremony of enkindling the fire in the sacrificial altar is described. After getting the news about Sītā from Hanumat Rāma arranged for a huge expedition in order to wage a war against Rāvana. While marching towards Laikā, he came to the sea-shore. The simile here describes him as he sat on the ground to think out some plan for crossing the sea which lay between his army and the city of his enemy. The Kusā grass must have been in abundance on the shore of the sea and the lustrous form of Rāma sitting on that grass must have given rise to the comparison with the fire expressed in this simile. The poet says that Rāma appeared like the fire put on the altar in which the Kusā grass was scattered. This shows that the grass was scattered not only on the sides of the altar but was strewn on the altar also.

Similarly a simile² occurring in the Aranyakānda describes Rāvana as seen by Sūrpanakhā. Here also the fire put

1. Evam uktah Kusāstirne Fire madanadīpateh /

Semviveśa tadā Rāmo Vedyām iva hutāśanah //

VI.19.12.

2. āsinam Sūryasankāśe Kāñcane paramāsane /

rukmavedigatam prājyam jvalantam iva pāvakam //

III.32.5.

on the altar is referred to as the standard of comparison Rāvana was sitting on a golden seat. It was shining like the sun and was a beautiful and excellent seat made of gold. Rāvana was himself an imposing personality. So his personal lustre must have given rise to the idea expressed in this simile. The author says that the golden seat on which the king of the demons sat was as it were an altar made of gold instead of clay and bricks with which it is usually built. He, sitting on that beautiful seat appeared like the fire put on the sacrificial altar. But here the seat stands for the altar and Rāvana for the fire. So the author says that he appeared like a fire put on a sacrificial altar which is made of gold. The simile is highly endowed with a touch of rare literary beauty. But over and above that it refers to the ceremony of putting the fire in the middle part of the altar after being generated by the friction of the Aranis and as such it is really a very important reference as far as the form of the performance of the sacrifice in that age is concerned.

In some similes¹ the poet has referred to the different

1. (i) Vrtāḥ Suhrdbhis' ca virejur adhvare,

yathā sadsyah sanitās trayoḅṅṅāyah //

II.103.32cd.

fires which were enkindled during the session of a sacrifice, He specially refers to ~~the~~ these fires which were generally kept in a sacrifice. He describes the meetings of three persons by comparing them to the three fires. The famous treatises on the Karmakānda i.e. the science or scripture dealing with sacrifices unanimously lay down the keeping of three fires in a sacrifice. These three sacrificial fires were called Gārhapatya, Ahavaniya and Dakṣiṇa. It appears that the author of the Rāmāyana refers to these three fires whenever he describes the presence of the three fires. The first simile occurring in II.103.32 cd describes the meeting of Rāma and Lakṣmana with Bharata at Citrakūta where the latter came to persuade Rāma to accept the throne of Ayodhyā which happened to belong to him as Daśaratha the late king had to accept the proposals of his queen Kaikeyī who demanded it on behalf of her son viz. Bharata. To describe the happy and cordial meeting of these brothers the three fires which invariably

✓ (ii) trins trinetrasmān putān rāksasādhipān /
trayaḥ lokā ivāvāgrān sthīatās traya ivāgnayah //

VII.5.7.

(iii) vihrtya kālam paripūranamānasān,
Sriyā vrtā dharmapure susamsthītān /

remain present at a sacrificial session were quite a suitable standard of comparison. Moreover the usage of fire as a standard of comparison in described personal lustre is quite frequently met with in the Rāmāyana. So it is also quite likely that the author must have taken the personal charmand the lustre of these three brothers in his consideration while devising this simile. The second simile given in VII.5.7 also similarly describes three brothers. In the utara kānda Vasistha the family priest of Rāma relates the story of a demon named Sukeśa. He had three sons named Mālyavat, Sumālin and Mālin. The author uses the simile to describe how he got the sons and how they appeared. In a single stanza he uses three similes. He says that those three sons of the demon Sukeśa were like three eyes of god Śaṅkara¹ like the three worlds and like the three fires in a sacrifice. In this stanza as well as in II.103.32cd the similarity of the number 'three' has given rise to the ideas expressed in these similes. It can also be safely presumed that just as in II.103.32cd. the personal lustre of the three demon brothers is also a point suggested by the expression. Similarly the third simile given in VII.102.17 describes

X. (iv) trayah samiddhā iva dipta tejaso
mahādhvare sādhu ^{hu} tratās trayo¹ gnayah //

VII.102.17.

Rāma, Lakṣmana and Bharata. The poet has taken the similarity of the number here also and has given this comparison. The three brothers quite naturally endowed with personal lustre and charm could very easily be compared to the three fires in a sacrifice. Thus all these three similes describe the three brothers. The only conclusion which can be derived from these evidences is that the cult of the sacrifice must be quite widely in prevalence. It must be the reason why the author preferred to describe the groups of the three brothers in the manner in which he describes them. The very expression suggests how this cult of sacrifice commanded a universal hold over the society. The poet very clearly says that the three brothers Rāma, Lakṣmana and Bharata shone like the three fires surrounded by the performers in a sacrifice. The other friends and relatives who remained present at the happy meeting of the brothers on Citrakūṭa, are likened to the 'Sadasyās' in a sacrifice and the three brothers who are really important here are compared to the three fires, and thus the whole expression gives a complete picture of a full fledged sacrifice in the process of performance wherein all the three fires are enkindled at their respective places and all the priests as well as the other performers including the yajmāna, the sacrificer himself are present. Similarly the simile in VII.102.17 also describes a sacrifice in detail. The poet says that the brothers appeared like the three fires which

are well ignited are resplendent with lustre and have been offered plenty of oblations, in a great sacrifice. All this is really a ^{si}descriptive evidence to show the universal prevalence of the cult of the rituals and sacrifice.

The importance of fire in a sacrifice is very clearly established in quite unequal ^{ivoc}forms by a simile¹ occurring in the utara-kāṇḍa. The poet wants to describe how the three sons of the demon named Śukesā, viz. Mālyavat, Sumālin and Mālin marched in the front place while proceeding to fight against god Viṣṇu. To suggest that they were first to march in this expedition, the poet uses this simile in which he compares the three brothers to the sacrificial fire. But here their number is not important, their being the first in the march is the really important fact which the poet wants to convey here. So he gives the analogy of the sacrifice. In sacrifices also the fire holds the first place and the poet says that these three brothers were marching ahead being the first among all the demons who accompanied them like the fire which is the first in the sacrifices. Thus this shows that in the age of the Rāmāyana the fire enjoyed a place of supreme importance as far as the sacrifice were

1. Mālyavāṅś' ca Sumāli ca Mālica Sumahābalah /

āsen purah sarās teṣāṃ kratunām iva pāvakah //

concerned. This is also corroborated when ^w we look to the descriptions of the sacrifices given in the literature right from the Vedas to the later classical Sanskrit literature. Everywhere we find that whenever a sacrifice was to be performed, ^{first} the fire was generated ^{it was} first; put on the altar and then the other usual ceremonies regarding the sacrifice commenced. The simile here expresses the very same idea of the paramount importance of fire and shows the prevalence of the sacrificial cult in its usual form in the age of the Rām.

A more important reference to the sacrificial cult is found in a simile¹ occurring in the Uttara kāṇḍa. Vasiṣṭha the family priest of Rāma was narrating to him the story of the birth of Rāvaṇa and his brothers. The simile refers to the father of Rāvaṇa, Kaikasī, a beautiful demoness, daughter of a demon named Sumālin, was quite mature and her marriage was to be settled, ^{with so on her father's advice she went} to Viśravas, the son of Pulastya a famous sage. The simile here shows, how pious and religious was Viśravas, while kaikasī was on her way Viśravas engaged himself in the performance of his daily religious ^u rites. The

1. etasminnantare Rāma Pulastyatanayo dvijah /
Agnihotram upātisthac caturtha iva pāvakah //

simile is important from the cultural point of view for two reasons, first of all it contains a reference to a sacrifice viz. Agnihotra which had been so commonly performed in almost every house of a Brahmin for centuries together, and secondly it gives the comparison of Visravas to the sacrificial fire which is said here to be as the fourth fire, that is to say the fire which was employed over and above the usually employed three sacrificial fires. Here the poet says that Visravas engaged himself in the performance of Agnihotra sacrifice like the fourth fire in a sacrifice. This shows that usually the three fires - viz. Gārhapatya, Ahavaniya and Dakṣare were employed in a sacrifice, but in certain other sacrifices the fourth sacrificial fire viz. the Anvāhāryapacana was also employed as it can be the probable conclusion which can be derived from this reference. In fact an-vāhārya-pacana fire was employed in the Anvāhārya sacrifice as it is described in the Śātapathī Brāhmaṇa also.

in which he has referred to the fire
 The author has given many similes as the standard of comparison. Out of them all do not seem to refer to the cult of the sacrifices. He has referred to the fire as the standard of comparison and given some other simile also which are important from the cultural point of view because

of their reference to some other things and phenomena. Among such similes the simile¹ describing fire as burning the forests are numerous and are important. He refers to the fire in that manner so as to convey its capacity of burning the ~~in~~ whole of a forest quite a number of times. Thus the similes given in II.63.44ab is a speech addressed to king Daśaratha by S'ravana On being severely wounded by him, that given in

1.(i) nā tvām ^{nu} aṁśahet kruddho vanam vanhir ivaidhitah /

II.63.44ab.

(ii) antardāhen dahanah santāpayati Rāghavam /
Vanadāhābhisantaptam gūdhoguir iva pādapam //

II.85.17

(iii) idam vidhavam sdyasyāmi śuskam vaṇam ivānalah /

V.41.11ab.

(iv) savvestemān^y lāngūle^e vyavardhata mahākapih /
śuskam indhanam āsādyā vanesviva hutāsanah //

V.53.7.

(v) adya tad vānarānikam Rāmam ca sahalakṣmaṇam /
nirdahiṣyāmi bānanghair vanam dīptair ivāgnibhih //

VI.59.6.

(vi) Sopi sainyaṇi saṅkruddho vānarāṇam mahānjasām /
mamantha paramāyatto vanany aguir ivot^thitah //

VI.66.12.

(vii) abhidudrāva senām tām vanāyagair iva jvalan /

VII.28.3cd.

II.85.17 very suggestively describes the concealed ^o agany of Bharata arising on account of the wrong done by his mother towards Rāma; the third simile given V.41.11 ab marks the desperate, determination of Hanumat to destroy the beautiful Asokavanikā. The fourth simile given in V.53.7 describes very vividly the expansion of Hanumat as the tail was being applied the material which was to be ignited; the fifth simile occurring in VI.59.6 gives out the determination of Rāvana to destroy Rāma, Lakṣmana and the whole army of the monkeys with a single stroke, the sixth simile given in VI.66.12 refers to the fierce attack of Kumbhakarna on the armies of Rāma and the seventh simile occurring in VII.28.3cd describes the valour of Indrajit while fighting against the gods. Thus mostly all these similes have the fire burning the whole forest as the standard of comparison and they occur mostly when some very dreadful destruction inflicted by a very fierce warrior is to be described. Excepting, the simile referring to Bharata's miserable condition, all these similes have almost the same purpose of describing a dreadful destruction. But inspite of these facts about these similes it can be concluded that there must have been forests or ranges of forests in which a huge conflaguration devouring the whole of a forest must have been a phenomenon showing somewhat frequent occurrence. If that were not so the expression given to such forests and the dreadful conflag-

guration would appear as just simply the products of the imagination of the author and would be quite devoid^{vo} of any reference to the reality. India being a hot country the forests were there just as they are even at present, and it is quite likely^k that such forests or the ranges of them caught fire many times which phenomenon has led, the poet describe the dreadful destructive^{on} by using it as an upamāna. The existence of animal sacrifices^{is} suggested by a simile¹ occurring in the Aranya Kānda. In this speech Sītā describes how Rāvaṇa's life would be in peril like that of an animal which is tied at the yūpa^u, the sacrificial post at which the animal which was to be sacrificed was tied. Sītā tells him that Rāma would put an end to the rest of his life, he being like an animal which is tied at the sacrificial yūpa., This shows such a sacrifice in which animals were sacrificed was in vogue in the age of the Rām. otherwise the author would not have put this simile in the mouth of Sītā to describe how Rāvaṇa ran the risk of losing his life.

In this connection another simile² occurring in the

1. sa te jīvitas'esasya Rāghavōntakaro bali /
pas'or yūpagatsyeva jīvitam tavaḥurlabham //
III.56.9.

2. ⁿdisceṣṭānām vadho rājan kutsito jagatīpateḥ /
kratumadhyopanītānām paśūnām iva Rāghava //
III.70.6.

Aranyakānda itself is noteworthy. The stanza in which this simile occurs is a speech of Lakṣmaṇa to Rāma on seeing the Kabandha, the headless demon in the forest. Lakṣmaṇa said to Rāma while determining to cut off the long arms of the trunk of the demon. He said that even if, they were to be killed by that dreadful headless demon, they should not be motionless and inert, they ought to do something to save themselves from the disaster. So while explaining this to Rāma he said that the slaughter of inert and lifeless animals was condemned even if such animals were brought for being offered in a sacrifice. The meaning conveyed by the stanza suggests that the animals were sacrificed in the age of the Rām. Such animals should be strong and in a good condition as the animals which were not strong and not in the proper condition were not considered fit for being offered as an oblation. Thus this simile is an additional proof of the prevalence of the practice of sacrificing animals in a sacrifice in the age of the Rām.

In a speech¹ made to Sītā by Hanumat he says how he would like to catch hold of Rāvaṇa and take him to Rāma.

1. Athavainam samutkṣipya uparyupari sāgaram /
Rāmāyopahariṣyāmi paśum pāsupateriva // V.13.51.

While saying that he refers to Rāvana by comparing him to an animal to be offered to Paśupati i.e. God Śaṅkara as he was generally known. This may be a reference to some such sacrifice in which the animal-sacrifice in honour of God Śaṅkara was undertaken. Here Hanumat expresses his intention to carry Rāvana as an animal carried to Paśupati. Hanumat's reference to an animal carried to Paśupati may be taken as a reference to the animal-sacrifice because otherwise there is no propriety in merely carrying an animal to Paśupati.

The existence of Śiva-worship^{h is} shown in a simile¹ given in II.106.31c-32b. This stanza is a speech of Bharata addressed to Rāma, when they met at Citrakūṭa. Here he entreats Rāma to accept his proposal. He says, "I pray to you, bowing my head in reverence to you to accept my proposal and do a favour to me by showing mercy to me as well as our relatives like God Maheśvara who is merciful to all the beings." Here the faith that God Śaṅkara is very kind and compassionate has been expressed and such faith can really be a direct result of a widely prevalent practice of worshipping Śiva.

1. Śirasā tvābhiyācēhaṃ kuruṣva karuṇāṃ mayi /

Bāndhaveṣu ca sarveṣu bhuteṣviva maheśvarah //

The belief that the fire is the only receptacle of oblations has been referred to in many similes. At many places the fire is denoted by the word 'Hutāsana'; which expresses a belief just related to the belief that it is the only receiver of the oblations. Such a belief also cannot be prevalent unless the cult of the sacrifices is widely current. The author gives expression to the above beliefs when he refers to the fire by the word 'Hutāsana' as well as 'Havyavāhana'. He has done this in many similes. ¹

1. (i) ānayaṣyāmi vai rāmaṃ havyavāhaṃ ivādhvarāt /

II.79.11cd.

(ii) ahaṃ praśṛavanasthāya rāghavāyādya maithilīṃ /
prāpayiṣyāmi śakrāya havyaṃ hutam ivānalah //

V.37.23.

(iii) dadṛśuḥ^s tām mahābhāgāṃ praviśantīm hutāsanaṃ /
sītām kṛtsnās trayo lokāḥ puṇyāṃ ājyā hutām iva //

pracukrusuḥ striyaḥ sarvās tām drṣtvā havyavāhanaṃ^e /
patantīm saṃskṛtām mantrair vasor dhārām ivādhvare //

VI.119.31c-33b.

(iv) tad rāvanahalaṃ prāpya balaṃ tasya mahīpateḥ /
pranasyata tadā sarvaṃ havyaṃ hutam ivānale //

VII.19.14-15b

(v) nasyati sma balaṃ tatra havyaṃ hutam ivānale /

VII.19.17ab.

The first simile given in II.79.11cd expresses the decision of Bharata, in which he says that he would bring Rāma back to Ayodhyā like the fire from a sacrifice. The second simile given in V.37.23 is a speech of Hanumat who declares his intention as to how he would carry Sītā to Rāma, like the fire carrying an oblation offered to Indra. This shows that it was believed that an offering dropped in fire reached the deity to whom it might be dedicated.

The third simile in this connection occurring in VI.119.31c-31b refers to the fire-ordeal of Sītā. She appeared to all those who witnessed the scene as a sanctified oblation being offered in the fire. In this very context Sītā likened to an oblation sanctified for being offered to the fire. The expression used at this place is, "patitām samskr̥tām mantrair vasor dhārām ivādhvare."¹ This shows the practice of offering a particular oblation in the fire during the course of a sacrificial performance. This oblation was called 'vasor dhārā' - 'a stream of Vasu' and this was an oblation of ghee offered at the time of the 'Agnicayana'. Such an oblation of ghee was prescribed in the Atharva-Veda and Taittirya Samhitā as is suggested by Prof. M. M. Williams while explaining the word 'vasor dhārā'.

1. A Sanskrit-English Dictionary, p.931 column I. lines 8-10.
by Prof. M. M. Williams.

The last two similes in this connection occurring in VII.19.14c-15b and VII.19.17ab respectively refer to the fight between a king named Anaranya and Ravana. The similes described how the army of Ravana was destroyed in the encounter against that of Anaranya. Here it is said that the army was destroyed like an oblation offered into the sacrificial fire.

Thus all these similes, which refer to the fire as a carrier of oblations, suggests that the belief in that capacity of fire was in vogue in the age of the Rām.

There are some references in the similes in the Rām wherein the author seems to allude to the ideals and morals of the age.

Thus at the outset of the epic, while describing Rāma, Nārada says¹ that Rāma was being approached by good people like an ocean which is a resort of all the rivers. This stanza gives a very clear conception regarding an ideal person as conceived by the people of that age. A good person is really he who rejoices in the company of other good person like himself.

1. Sarvadābhigatah sadbhih samudra iva sindhubhih /
āryah sarvasamāsaiva sadaiva priyadarsanah //

The ideal held by the simile in the Rām., here is that a good person is a real resort of other good persons. An ocean is a natural resort of the rivers. Similarly Rāma was always a natural resort of all such good persons. The ideal embodied in the personality of Rāma is really such that it should be aspired by men through all the ages. It is also a psychological fact that a person would always like to meet a person possessing a similar temperament and nature, similar likes and dislikes.

Further Narada says ¹ ~~that~~ about Rāma that he was endowed with all the good qualities. He was like a sea in the matter of seriousness and imposing nature and like the Himalayas in the matter of patience. Here the author has given two similes and both of them are really significant. The sea is known for its depth. The simile also shows that in the age of the Rām. the idea about the seriousness of nature had been already clearly determined and the sea had been a standard of comparison when the seriousness of a person was intended to be described. This has been asserted in several such other references. ²

1. Sa ca sarvagunopetaḥ kausalyānandavardhanaḥ /

samudra iva gāmbhīrye dhairyena Himvāniva // I.1.17

2. (i) Sa satyavādī dharmaत्मā gāmbhīryat sāgaropamaḥ /

II.34.9ab

(ii) samudram iva gāmbhīram samudram iva niḥsvanam /

which occur throughout the course of the narration of this epic. So such references show that the people held that the seriousness of good persons should be like the depth of the sea. It is quite proper also that the sea may be taken as a standard of comparison for describing the depth and seriousness of the nature of the persons. The deep waters of the sea remaining steady throughout the year furnish a good object to be taken for comparison in such a matter.

Secondly the people believed that the patience of a good person should be enduring, never shaken by anything external or internal. In the description of Rāma, Nārada says that his patience was like Himālaya. Here 'Himālaya' does not stand for its height, but it denotes the immovableness inherent in itself. The expression primarily signifies that Rāma had unshakable patience which would remain undisturbed under any ^c circumstances. The poet has used this expression also, at many places. ¹

2. (ii) vegas te vāyunā tulyo gāmbhīryam udadher iva /

VII.37.6cd.

1. (i) Sthitah svadharmā ^e himvān ivācalah / II.112.30cd

(ii) mahādharaśamo dhṛtyām matta ^{s'} ca guṇavattarah / II.1.39cd

There are several other references occurring in different contexts which throw a flood of light on the high and excellent standard of morality in the age of the Rām. While describing the capital city viz. Ayodhyā, the poet gives a clear picture of the people residing in it. The poet says that in that city all men and women were utterly religious and had restraint over their senses; they were like the great sages characterised by keeping up the moral character and extremely pure. This description though a side light on the character of the people gives a really idealistic pattern of society. The poet does not here talk about some distinguished persons belonging to the higher and aristocratic strata of the society. He gives the picture of the people who were of just a common stock of the population. It was even this class of the common people that showed such a high standard of character and morality.

2. (iii) tvadvidhā buddhi sampannā mahātmāno nararṣabhāḥ /
 āpatsu na prakampate vāyufvegair ivācalah //

III.67.7c-8b

(iv) yan mahendram ivājayyam duṣprakampyam ivācalam /

II.35.7ab

1. Sarve narāś ca nāryas ca dharmasīlāḥ susamyatāḥ /
 uditāḥ śīlavṛttābhyāṃ maharṣaya ivāmalāḥ // I.6.9.

Similarly while describing a sacred place, Akardama, the author uses a simile¹ which displays the concept as regards the mental outlook and temperament of a noble person after receiving instructions from Nārada, Vālmiki goes to perform his daily rites on the bank of the river Tamasā. Akardama was the name of a sacred place situated on the bank of that river. So while they approached the place Vālmiki began describing the sanctity of that Tirtha- in these words, " Bhāradvāja, know this to be a Tirtha named Akardama which is a beautiful and there pure water in it^{is} like the mind of a good and noble person." The simile through describes the sanctity of a place it very clearly brings out the idea about the mind of a noble person as it was conceived by the people of that age. It suggests that the mind of a noble person ought to be good, and serene, resulting in the amicability of the person in his behaviour towards others. It is only by looking to the behaviour of a person towards others that a true judgement about his ~~nobility~~ nobility can be pronounced. The simile here suggests that the ideal and noble person should be serene, amicable and pious.

1. Akardamam idam tirtham Bhāradvāja nisāmaya /
ramaniyam prasannāmbu sanmanusyamano yathā // I.2.5.

~~Similarity while describing xxxxxxxx~~

1
A simile occurring in the Uttarakāṇḍa emphasises the ~~xx~~ control over the senses. The stanza refers to the fight between the demon Sumālin and the god Viṣṇu. He broke his chariot and consequently the horses yoked to the chariot of the demon at once went out of control and began running anywhere they liked. The stanza describes the pitiable plight of Sumālin by likening him to a person who is maddened by the unrestrained and wanton wandering of the horses in the form of the sense-organs. He says that the demon was at once reduced to the condition of a person devoid of self-control and becoming without any steadfastness due to the senses taking their own course. For such a loss of control over the senses the reason is nothing but the lack of patience which can be called self-restraint. Thus here in an indirect way the need for self-control is stressed and the ways and means are suggested to achieve that end; and consequently this simile also reflects the standard of morality in the age of the Rām. It also gives the clear picture of a person who is devoid of such moral principles and how he becomes doomed and subject to the most pitiable condition.

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1. tair aśvair bhrāmyate bhrāntaiḥ sumāli rāksasesvarah /
indriyāśvaih paribhrāntair dhṛtihīno yathā narah //

In the same context¹ while describing Viṣṇu, the poet gives the idea as to how a person who has complete self-restraint remains unaffected by any sort of calamity. For this he uses a simile and thereby glorifies the virtue of self-control. The poet here wants to describe how the thousands of arrows discharged by Sumāli had no effect on Viṣṇu. This is done by likening Viṣṇu to a person who has complete control over the senses.

Some of the similes in the Rām. show the exact ideas about the behaviour of persons. A simile² occurring in the Bālakānda shows how a person should try to preserve his fame in order to maintain his social status. The simile is a reply of Vasīṣṭha to Viśvāmitra who proposed to barter Vasīṣṭha's cow which yielded every desired object, with whatever riches and wealth he wished ^tto have from him. Vasīṣṭha's reply to ^{him}it was that the cow was the most cherished object for him like the fame which is always the most cherished thing for a person who has self-respect and who is a master of his ^eself. This appropriate answer of ^aVasīṣṭha to Viśvāmitra displays a high standard of morality prevalent in the age of the Rām. The fame was always looked upon as the most

1. Cukṣubhe na raṇe Viṣṇur jitendriya ivādhībhiḥ /

VII.7.34ab.

2. Śāśvatī śabalā mahyam kīrtir ātmavato yathā /

I.53.13ab.

cherished possession of a person who is good and self-made person. The person never became ready to undergo any transaction which would deteriorate his fame. This is surely a golden rule for the behaviour of an individual which forbids any heinous act by the performance of which an individual would incur infamy. Self-respect and fame of an individual were the most cherished objects which were not to be lost under any circumstances. Vasistha's character is here shown in brilliant colours. He seems to represent here the nobility of the age.

Similarly a simile¹ occurring in the Aranyakānda emphasises how a person should strive to maintain his good fame and try to discard any sort of infamy. It also suggests how quickly the person loses his fame when he behaves in crooked ways. The stanza is an address to Sītā by Rāma when he started in search of her. Rāma wants here to describe how Sītā had left him. To describe this he uses this simile in which he describes how fame forsakes a crooked person.

Rāma says, "O lady having fine waist, and having beautiful limbs, do not go leaving a pitiable person like myself here, like fame leaving off a crooked person." This suggests that

1. nām ihotsrjya karuṇam kīrtir naram ivānrjum /
kva gacchasi varārohe ma motsrja sumadhyame //

the people held the straight-forwardness in high esteem. Fame was considered as the most cherished thing and it could be maintained only if a person behaved in a straight-forward manner.

In this connection a simile¹ occurring in the Sundara-kāṇḍa is also worth noting. Hanumat, after a great deal of search and painful investigation found Sītā in the Aśokavanikā. On seeing her in such a pathetic condition he ponders over her situation and the circumstances which led to her captivity. In this connection he uses a simile in which he compares Sītā to fame which has been denounced by a charge not hitherto witnessed. This is merely a comparison as Hanumat did not mean any real resemblance between Sītā and such a fame. He meant simply the change in the condition. Of course, that change was from bad to worse. But as a side glance it can be seen from this reference that the bright and glorious reputation was held very high in that age, and a single instance of some sort of accusation reduced a person to quite a low level of infamy.

Sītā has been twice compared to the fame at other places.² In both these similes also the high ideal about

1. abhūtenāpāyādēna kīrtim nipatitām iva / V.15.34cd.

2. (i) sannām iva mahākīrtim / V.19.11a.

(ii) visuddhā triṣu lokeṣu maithilī janakātmajā /

na hi hātum iyam śakyā kīrtir ātmavatā yathā // VII.12.24

fame has been heralded by the poet. In the first simile the observation of Hanumat is contained as he had been watching her. In the meantime Rāvana's approach was announced. The poet here in a single quarter of a stanza describes the condition of Sītā. He says that on hearing of the approach of Rāvana, Sītā appeared suddenly changed like the great fame which has been denounced. This single short expression is highly significant. It means that the fame of a person was intact as long as there was no charge or denouncement; and at a single stroke of such a charge it was doomed, however well established it might have been.

Similarly in the second simile occurring in VI.121.20, the same ideal regarding the high position of fame in life is eulogised by the poet. The stanza is an address of Rāma to god Agni after the famous fire-ordeal of Sītā. He says that Sītā was pure and she was not worth being discarded like the fame by a person who has self-respect. .

Among other ideals the ideal of conjugal harmony and fidelity has been held in the most bright light by the Rām. The example of Rāma and Sītā is most outstanding for a sublime conjugal love. The poet has sung the praises of

this love in touching words. At the very outset he says¹ that Sītā was as dear to Rāma as his very life. She^e was born in the respectable family of Janaka and was like the Māyā of God. She was endowed with all the good characteristics and was the best among women. Sītā's following Rāma out of love towards him is likened to Rohinī's following Candra. This description of Rāma and Sītā given in the first canto of the epic is lively and inspiring and it puts an ideal of conjugal love before the world.

Similarly at the end of the Bālakāṇḍa also, the author gives^a vivid description² of the devotion and love

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1. rāmasya dayitā bhāryā nityam prāṇasamā hitā/
janakasya kule jātā devamāyeva nirmitā //
sarva lakṣaṇa sampannā nārīṇāṃ uttamā vadhūh /
sītāpyanugatā rāmaṃ śāśinaṃ rohinī yathā // I.1.26c-28b.
 2. rāmas tu sītayā sārḍham vijahāra bahūnṛtūn /
manasvī tadgatamanās tasyā hr̥di samarpitah //
priyā tu sītā rāmasya dārāḥ pitṛkṛtā iti /
gunād rūpagunāc cāpi prītir bhūyobhyavardhata /
tasyā^sācā bhartā dviguno hr̥daye parivartate//
antargatam abhivyaktam ākhyāti hr̥dayam hr̥dā /
tasya bhūyo viśeṣeṇa maithilī janakātmajā //
devatābhiḥ samā rūpe sītā śrīr iva rūpinī /
tayā sa rājarsisuto'bhīrāmaya

between Rāma and Sītā. Here the poet describes how Rāma and Sītā passed their days at Ayodhyā after their marriage. He says that Rāma passed many seasons in the company of Sītā being free to act according to his sweet will, always having his mind entirely engrossed in Sītā and fully devoted to her. He was most devoted to her because she was his wife ordained to be so by his parents. But that was not the only reason for his love towards her. She had all the excellent qualities and over and above that she was the mistress of matchless beauty. After describing the love from Rāma's side, the author then turns his attention to Sītā and says that in her heart the affection for her husband was really the double of what her husband owed to her. He, very poetically and beautifully expresses this unheard multiplication of love by expressing how this love of Rāma was reciprocated by Sītā. He says that whatever was there inside the hearts of these two, did not need the help of speech, the heart itself expressed what was internal to the heart itself and made explicit what was implicit. The poet has never felt tired of referring to the unique beauty of his heroine. So he says here that in the matter of beauty she resembled the goddesses. Even among the goddesses, Sri i.e. Lakṣmī

sameyivān uttamarājakanyayā /

atīva rāmah śusubhétikāmayā

vibhuh śriyā viṣṇur ivāmaresvarah // I.26c-30d.

is the most beautiful one, and so the author has quite appropriately chosen her here as the standard of comparison. He says that Sītā was beautiful like Laksmī; and finally to give a finishing touch to this glorious picture of the conjugal love, he says that Rāma, the son of royal sage Daśaratha, being united with that beautiful woman, best among the princesses, appeared like god Viṣṇu when he was united with goddess Laksmī after their marriage. Thus the author here gives the description of the exemplary love between the hero and the heroine of his epic.

From these descriptions much information can be gathered from the social and cultural point of view. The first and the foremost thing which could be extracted from it is the ideal of love according to the author of the Rām. Secondly the very objects used by him as the standards of comparison suggest quite a lot in this connection. Prānas were taken to be the most cherished and dear object. It was also considered that for a happy married life, there should be a relation similar to what exists between a person and his soul. Thirdly the information regarding the standard of beauty is also important. In the later literature, Rati, the wife of Kāmadeva, the god of love is taken as the standard of comparison. In the Rām. also there are some stray occasions when Rati is referred to in this manner.

But compared to such references to goddess Lakṣmī their number is very poor. So it can be safely concluded that in the age of the Rām. Lakṣmī and not Rati was the standard of comparison in the matter of personal charm and beauty. In the later classical literature, we find many references to Rati in this connection, while in the Rām. their number is small, so this may lead us to conclude that this sort of expression found in the Rām. [✓] makes an earlier stage while the references to Rati, found in the later classical Sanskrit literature show the signs of a more developed ideology regarding this, and the exact replacement of Lakṣmī effected by Rati.

A simile¹ occurring in the Ayodhyā Kāṇḍa speaks for the devotion and exemplary love of Sītā towards Rāma. The simile occurs in a tragic situation. Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā had become ready to leave for the forests. The people said that Sītā who followed Rāma like a shadow following an object was really a person who had fulfilled all that she could have done. This compliment given to Sītā by the

1. kṛtakṛtyā hi vai dehī chāyevā^{nu}ngatā patim /,

na jahāti ratā dharme merum arka prabhā yathā //

people of Ayodhyā is not merely a verbal praise, but it is the best reward awarded to the right type of womanhood. The very comparison with a shadow following the object speaks volumes for her love towards her husband.

The simile throws light on the ideal adored and upheld by the people of that age. They also use a second simile in this very stanza. It seems that they believed that Sītā did not only follow Rāma, but she being always keen on acting according to the right behaviour, never forsook Rāma like the lustre of the sun never leaving the mountain Meru. The second comparison is also important because it pays high tributes to Sītā and Rāma, both at this place. Sītā is shown to be resembling the lustre of the sun and Rāma is likened to the mountain Meru on which that lustre was usually believed to reside, because the people seem to have thought the sun rose from the Meru mountain everyday and as such its lustre must have resided permanently on that mountain.

In this connection one more simile¹ occurring in the

-
1. iyaṃ Sītā mama sutā sahadharī^macari tava /
 pratīccha caināṃ bhadraṃ te paṇim grhṇīṣva paṇinā //
 pativrata mahābhāgā chāyevānugatā sadā /
 ityukvā prākṣipad rājā mantrapūtam jalaṃ tadā //

Bāla-Kānda is noteworthy. The people of Ayodhyā who went to give a send off to Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā gave a glorious tribute to the love of Sītā because of her decision to follow her husband to the forest. So they were quite justified in paying that tribute to Sītā. But here in this simile which is employed by Janaka, Sītā's father, in his speech to Rāma gives an expression to his expectation about Sītā's future relation with Rāma. Janaka says these words to Rāma while actually performing the marriage ceremony. Here Janaka says to Rāma, "Here is my daughter Sītā, who will be your partner in all the religious duties. Please accept this, hail be to you, take her hand by your hand. She will be entirely devoted to the husband and the fortunate lady will always follow her husband like a shadow always following the object of which it is a shadow." This speech of Janaka to Rāma is a very clear depiction of all the expectations of a dutiful and righteous father with respect to his daughter. He refers to the 'shadow' following its object as a standard of comparison. This is remarkable because as in II.40.24 the same thing is taken as the upamāna which fact supplies one more proof for the conclusion that this was the ideal regarding the exalted position of conjugal love and happiness. Thus the simile, together with that contained in II.40.24 gives a very valuable

information regarding one of the most important ideals adored by the people of that age.

In this connection there are other similes¹ which also deserve to be noted because they depict how ^aardently Sītā loved Rāma. All of them mainly dwell upon the unity ^{and} inseparability as a natural consequence of their love. All these similes when considered together seem to form a group by themselves as they all alike establish the ideal unity between Rāma and Sītā and as they have the same object as the standard of comparison. Thus they all refer to the inseparability of the lustre of the sun from the sun itself as the standard of comparison for this matter. The first simile in this connection occurring in V.21.16 ab is a speech of Sītā herself addressed to Rāvaṇa when he proposed to the her to accept his entreaties. Here Sītā in order, to put an effective check on Rāvaṇa's lustful behaviour declares

1. (i) ananyā Rāghavenāham bhāskareṇa prabhā yathā /

V.21.16 ab.

(ii) Rāmeṇa saṅgatā Sītā bhāskareṇa prabhā yathā /

V.27.12.ab.

(iii) ananyā hi mayā Sītā bhāskareṇa prabhā yathā /

VI.121.19cd.

especially how ridiculous it was for Rāvana to make such proposals because she was utterly devoted to Rāma and was absolutely inseparable from her husband like lustre which is always inseparable from the sun.

The second simile occurring in V.27.12ab is a speech of Trijatā who was telling about the dream regarding Sītā's future witnessed by her. She told the demonesses how Rāvana was doomed and how Sītā would be reunited with Rāma. She said that Sītā was inseparable from Rāma like the lustre of the sun, which is inseparable from the sun.

The third simile, in this connection occurring in VI.121.19cd refers to the fire-order^a of Sītā. It is a speech addressed by Rāma to god, Agni. He says that Sītā is inseparable from him because she is united with him like the lustre^u which is united with the sun. This is Rāma's high tribute to Sītā's love towards him.

Out of other references¹ in this matter, those

1. (i) Samāneṣyati sugrīvaḥ sītayā saha rāghavam /
s'as'āṅkam iva rohiṇyā hētvā tam rāvaṇam rane //

IV.35.14.

(ii) prṣṭham āroha me devi ma vikāṅksaḥ^{sva} sobhane /
yogam anviccha rāmena sāsāṅkeneva rohiṇī //

V.37.26

referring to the union between Candra and Rohini are important because such references are frequent.

The first simile, in this connection, occurring in IV.35.14 is a speech of Tārā to Lakṣmaṇa who had been on a visit to remind Śugrīva of his promise given to Rāma to help to find out Sītā. The second simile given in V.37.20 is a speech of Hanumat in V.37 which he says to Sītā how he would try to unite her with Rāma. Similarly the simile in V.39.45cd is also a speech of Hanumat to Sītā, wherein he gives her the picture of her future union with Rāma. The fourth simile, in this connection occurs when Hanumat takes Sītā's leave before proceeding to return.

All these similes show that the union between Rohini and Candra was considered to be an ideal. One, and hence, it was taken [^] taken as a standard of comparison if such an idea was to be conveyed. Over and above that they also show that the knowledge about the stars, planets, constellations etc., was fairly wide spread otherwise the above references which speak of the union between the Moon and Rohini would

1.(iii) tvam sameṣyasi rāmena śasāṅkeneva rohiṇī /

V.39.45cd.

(iv) tvam sameṣyasi rāmena śasāṅkeneva rohiṇī /

V.56.20cd.

not have been found. It is also found that whenever such a union is to be suggested the poet uses the union between the Moon and the Rohiṇī as the upamāna in the majority of cases when he refers to the god-world. ~~So it was~~

similes

In this connection, some other[^] are also noteworthy as they refer to the union between certain other gods and their wives. Out of them¹ also the union between the

1.(i) taṃ nityam ^{nu a} amīrktāsmi yathā sūryaṃ suvarcalā /

V.24.9.cd

(ii) Agneḥ Svāhā yathā devī Śacīvendrasya S'obhane /

V.24.26.cd.

(iii) Atha Dāsārathas' citraṃ citrakūṭam adarsāyat/
bhāryām amarasaṅkāśaḥ śacīm iva purandaraḥ // .

II.94.2.

(iv) māṃ hi dharmātmanah patnīm śacīm iva śacīpateḥ /
tvad anyas triṣu lokeṣu prārthayen manasāpi kaḥ //

V.22.14.

(v) yathā śacī mahābhāgā śakraṃ samp^uatīṣṭhati /

V.24.10ab.

(vi) Śacīva patyā śakreṇa bhartrā nāthavati hyasi /

V.39.52cd.

god Agni and his wife, Svāhā that between Sūrya and his wife Suvarcalā, and that between god Indra and his wife Śacī are important. The similes referring to these unions are many and they so ^ulemnly proclaim the harmony of ^uconjugal life whenever they describe the characters of the epic. The similes occurring in II.94.2, V.22.14, V.24.10ab, V.39.52cd., V.59.28, VI.128.38cd and VII.42.28c-29b refer to Sītā and Rāma while the simile occurring in VII.12.6c-7b refers to a damsel named Hemā and the demon Maya, the father in law of Rāvana. Some of these similes are speeches while some others are descriptions. But they are unanimous in bringing out the conjugal harmony between the pairs to which they refer. Thus they show that these ^ucomplexes which are mentioned in these similes were considered to be the ideals in this respect and were adored like that in the age of Rām. The majority of these similes contain a reference to Śacī and Indra, which fact shows that among the Epic-panthron

1. (vii) amuraktā hi vaidehī rāmaṃ sarvātmanā śubhā /
 ananya cittā Rāme ca paṇḍomīva purnādareḥ //
 V.59.28.

(viii) Sītā samagrā Rāmeṇa mahendreṇa yathā śacī /
 VI.128.38cd.

(ix) Hemā nāmāpsarā tāta śrutapūrvā yadi tmayā /
 dairatair mama sā dattā paṇḍomīva śatkratoḥ //
 VII.12.6c-7b.

they were considered to be an ideal par excellence as far as the conjugal love was concerned.

In connection with the beliefs and attitude towards woman, the author has expressed some facts about the age of marriage in case of women. In two similes¹ occurring in the Ayodhyākāṇḍa an indirect hint seems to have been contained regarding the age of marriage in case of women to ^mthe age of the Rām. Both these similes occur in the speech of Sītā to ^aAnsūyā while she referred to her marriage. It appears from Sītā's speech that the marriage of a daughter, at the proper time was a matter of worry for a father ~~for~~ in that age, just as it is so, in the present age also. She here says that her father felt it quite a matter of worry when he found that she had reached the age when her union with her husband after her marriage should be effected immediately. He felt so intensely like a poor ^{person who felt the loss of} ^{his} wealth very much. Thus from this simile it seems that there

1. patisamyogasulabham vayo dr̥ṣṭvā tu me pitā /
cintām abhyagamad dīno vittanāsād ivādhanah //

II.118.34.

(ii) sadr̥śāc cāpakr̥ṣṭāc ca loke kanyāpitā janāt /
paradharsanam avāpⁿnoti śakrenāpi samo bhuvi //

II.118.35.

must have been some definite notion about the time of the marriage in case of women in that age. Dr. A.S. Altekar after referring to this stanza, in his book¹, remarks,... while narrating the story of her marriage to Anasūyā, Sitā describes to her the great anxiety of her father, when she had attained an age fit for being united to a husband. It is therefore clear that Sitā was a youthful maiden when she was married." Moreover it also appears from the same passage that to a father the proper observance of the custom of marrying a daughter at the proper age was a matter of worry. So it seems that the daughters were given away in marriage at their proper age, and that should be just the age of youth and not that of a child.

The second simile in this connection occurring in the same speech of Sitā, shows what a calamity it was for a father if he could not get his daughter married at the proper age. He would suffer insults from his equals as well as his inferiors if he neglected his duties in this respect. He might undergo a great social denunciation,

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1. The position of Women in Hindu civilisation, p. 53
by Dr. A.S. Altekar.

simply because he was a father of a daughter who was not married even though she was quite mature. It appears from the simile that such an insult and social disgrace were inflicted, or at least were feared irrespective of the considerations of position of the father. He might be powerful like Indra on this earth, yet, he must suffer from disgrace if he did not look to his duties as a father. Thus these two similes show the position of a father, as well as the women specially with regard to their marriage in the age of the Rām. As regards other references important from cultural and social point of view ^o these which refer to the customs and manners ^r prevalent in the age of the Rām. are certainly of immense value. They show the general outlook of the people of that age and as such they become important from the historical point of view also. These customs refer to the life of an individual as well as the society; and give valuable information regarding the social conditions of that time. There are references contained in similes which show how the men and women dressed themselves, how they behaved towards each other, how they talked with each other and how they reacted against certain occurrences having emotional or psychological significance. While there are some other references which show how the people behaved in groups or which general

rules and customs they observed on some social occasions. There are other similes also which show the different tastes of persons belonging to different classes of the society. Thus all these similes give a lot of information which can enlighten us on many points and add a great deal to our knowledge.

The similes which refer to the ladies as to how they dressed themselves are quite interesting. A simile¹ occurring in the Aranyakānda thus shows that the ladies always used to make a ~~s~~ saphron mark on their foreheads as that must have been taken^{u n} as a mark of auspiciousness. The simile occurs in the description of the Hemanta season. The poet says that in that season the sun goes southwards and so the northern direction did not appear fine like a woman who does not make a mark of saphron on her forehead. This shows that making such a mark must have been a general custom with the ladies in the age of the Rām. It must have been done firstly with some aesthetic point of view because it was quite natural that a lady having such a mark on her forehead might appear more beautiful. ^{Con}Secondly it must have

1. sevamāne dr̥ṣṭham sūrye diśam antakasevitām /
vihintilakeva strī nottarā dik prakāśate //

been a mark done for the sake of auspiciousness, because without such a decoration a lady must have appeared gloomy just as this description itself shows. The simile is more interesting as it refers to this custom which is observed as a rule by Indian ladies even in the present age. In India all the married Hindu ladies as well as unmarried girls put this saffron mark on their foreheads. Only the widows are forbidden to do so. This simile thus shows that this custom is really a very ancient custom which was practised even in the days of the Rām.

Similarly important are the similes which refer to the ladies having ornaments on their bodies as upamānas. The desire to look more beautiful is quite natural with human beings, and this desire has a special significance for ladies. They have been considered as quite easily ⁿ prone to this desire from very ancient period. Such a desire may be quite justified also in their case as their place, respect and position in the family as well as society depends much on their personal charm and beauty, and it is quite obvious that such personal charm can be enhanced much by ornaments. The author of the Rām. has

given some similes¹ which refer to the laides who have put on various ornaments on their bodies. These similes which refer to various things and which occur in different contexts show that the custom of putting ornaments on the bodies in case of laides was prevalent in the age of the Rām. The first simile occurring in II.50.23 describes the river Gaṅgā; that occurring in III.75.17cd refers to the ^klāḥ, Pampā; the third simile contained in IV.27.19cd describes a river named Prācīnvāhinī; the fourth simile in this connection, given in V.3.18cd refers to Lankā, and the last simile occurring in V.14.13cd describes a beautiful

1. (i) devarājopavāhyais' ca sannādita vanāntarām /

pramadām iva yathāna bhūṣitām bhūṣaṇottamāḥ //

II.50.23.

(ii) anyais' ca vividhair vṛkṣaiḥ pramadām iva bhūṣitām /

III.75.17 cd.

(iii) vasaṅbharanopetā pramadevābhya lankṛtā /

IV.27.19 cd.

(iv) yantrāgarastanīm rddhām pramadām iva bhūṣitām /

V.3.18cd.

(v) rarāja vasudhā tatra pramadeva vi^bghūṣitā /

V.14.13cd.

landscape in the Aśokavanikā. Thus all these similes describe different things like a river, a lake a city or a landscape. But all of them have a beautiful lady adorned with ornaments as upamāna. This shows that the ladies in the age of the Rāmāyana used to decorate their form with ornaments and such a practice must have been probably widely current among them.

Men were not an exception to this general practice of decorating the body with ornaments. There are some similes¹ which refer to this ornamentation done by men. The former simile occurring in IV.1.21 out of the two similes quoted here describes the karnikāra trees in the forests ~~in the~~ which surrounded the lake, Pampā while the latter one contained in VI.39.7cd refers to the hillocks in Laṅkā. The former simile refers to the men as being covered with gold¹ which surely means the golden ornaments, and it also describes them as having a yellow^{garment} to cover the lower part of the body. The simile shows that the men

1.(i) supuṣpitāns tu paśyemān karnikārān samantatah /
hātakapratisañchannān narān pītāmarān iva //
IV.1.21.

(ii) dhārayanty agamās tatra bhūṣanānīva mānavāh /
VI.39.7cd.

used to adorn their bodies with ornaments and put on, garments to cover their bodies. The latter simile gives a general description of the men as adorning their bodies with ornaments. Thus these⁵ similes give a valuable piece of information regarding the mode of dressing of the men in the age of the Rāmāyana.

As regards the dressing of persons in the age of the Rām. one important fact which is noteworthy is that the dressing of the persons was not always the same. It varied according to the occasion, show the mode of the usual dress.

In this connection two similes¹ which occur in the Aranyakāṇḍa are also noteworthy. The stanza is a speech of Sūrpanakhā to Rāvaṇa. She here wanted to describe the futility of the power and strength of Rāvaṇa. She said ~~that~~ that a person who is dethroned from the position of a king is utterly useless like a clothe which is worn out or a garland which is marred by dust. This shows that the people must have a good taste about the colour as

1. upabhuktaṃ yathā vāsaḥ srajo vā mṛditā yathā /
 evaṃ ^r rājyāt paribh^aras^aṣṭaḥ ^a samarⁱthopi nirarthakāḥ //

well as the decency of clothes and a ^{sc} fixation for using flowers and garlands as an addition to their usual clothing and dressing. They used to put on good and decent clothes and discarded the worn out clothes and did not like to have garlands which are marred by dust as they became totally useless. Thus these similes give as a sidelight of the refined tastes of the people ~~of~~ in the age of the Rām. regarding clothes and the use of the flowers and garlands.

The decoration by ornaments was not confined to men and women only, in the age of the Rām. it embraced the world of the pet animals also. There are some similes in which the author of the Rām. refers to such sort of ornamentation done in case of animals. Two simile¹ occurring in the Aranyakānda show the existence of such a practice of

1. (i) Sā hemavarṇā nilāṅgam ^mhraithilī rāksasādhipam /
súsubhe kāñcanī kāñci nilam gajam iva śritā //

III.52.25

(ii) ^{ru}tanpravāla raktā nilāṅgam rāksasesvaram /
prāsobhayata vaiḍehī gajam kasyeva kāñcanī //

III.52.33.

decorating elephants. The similes occur in the description of Sītā given at the time when she was kidnapped by Rāvana. The author refers to the contrast of colours also in these similes. He says that Sītā who had a golden colour appeared in the side of that king of demons, like a golden girdle round the waist of a she-elephant. In the second simile also he says almost the same thing. From these similes it can be seen that there must have been the practice of decorating the elephants by a golden girdle.

In some similes the position of women in the age of the Rām. is reflected. A simile¹ contained in II.30.8 is one of such example^s. It is a speech of Sītā to Rāma when he refused to allow her to accompany him to the forests and exhorted her to stay with with his parents and attend to them. Sītā gave a suitable retort to Rāma saying that it was not proper for him to entrust her to the care of others; she being his lawful wife had stayed with him for a long time. His action in that case would be like giving away of a dancer - 'śailūsa' to other persons. Here Sītā compares herself to such a woman. The reference shows that some women might have attained proficiency in dancing and they worked as dancers. It also shows that such girls were

1. svayam tu bhāryām kaumarīm ciram adhyusitām satīm /
śailūsa iva mām rāma parebhyo dātum ichhasi // II.30.8.

offered as gifts to other persons. This may probably be taken to suggest that women were considered to be a sort of property which could be kept or offered as a gift at the sweet will of of the owner. Nothing certain can be concluded from such a stray reference. Yet it can be understood to reflect the position of some women who suffered such a misfortune.

The practice of observing sorrow in case of widows has been referred to in some similes while some similes refer to the widows in general. In a speech¹ of Rāma addressed to Lakṣmaṇa occurring in the Ayodhyākāṇḍa there is a reference to the condition of a widow. Lakṣmaṇa was enraged to learn that Rāma was to go to the forests just to keep his father's promise. While Kausalyā proposed that she would accompany Rāma if at all he was required to go. So, to pacify his mother and Lakṣmaṇa Rāma first tried to reveal the impossibility of Kausalyā's following him to the forests. He asked Lakṣmaṇa as to how Kausalyā could follow him to the forests from there like an ordinary woman who had been widowed, when the king, the supporter of the religion was alive and especially when he followed the right behaviour.

1. tasmin punar jīvati dharmarāje
 viśeṣṭaḥ sve pathi vaiyamāne /
 devī mayā sārḍham itopagacchet
 katham svid anyā vidhaveva nārī // II.21.61.

The simile employed here by Rāma shows the mode of behaviour not only in case of a widow, but also in case of an ordinary woman. Here Rāma means that Kausalyā could not act according to her sweet will when the king was there to decide the matter for her. He thought it quite impossible that his mother should follow him to the forests. From his speech it appears that in case of a woman there was restriction according to her desire as long as her husband was alive. In those days the word of her husband was the law and she was supposed to abide by it.

Compared to the above simile which indirectly refers to a widow the two similes which occur in the Sundarakānda, can be taken as direct references to widows and their pitiable condition. These similes occur in Sītā's speech

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1. (i) nūnam laṅkā hate pāpe rāvaṇe rākṣasādhamē /
 śoṣam yāsyati durdharsā pramadā vidhavā yathā //
- (ii) punyotsava samutthā ca naṣṭabhartrī sarākṣasī /
 bhaviṣyati purī laṅkā naṣṭabhartrī yathāṅganā //

addressed to the demoness who were keeping a watch on her at the Asókavanikā. She tried to draw the pitiable condition of Lankā when it would be conquered by Rāma. For this she refers to a widow as the upamāna. She told them that when the wretched demon Rāvana would be killed, the beautiful city of Lankā would be devastated like a widow after the death of the husband. In the second stanza quoted here in this connection she told that the city would be facing a very adverse condition like that of a woman who had lost her husband. So in both these similes the condition of a widow has been described by the author. As far as that description stands it appears that the widowhood must have been felt very much by a woman in that age. She became at once emaciated due to sorrow. The word 'durdharsā' used for Lankā also suggests that any woman irrespective of her high position whatsoever, suffered a lot when she had lost her husband. It appears from these similes that the social position of a woman also must have been affected in that condition as also her own individual condition which suffered from the calamity. Thus these similes show that the widowhood worked like a curse on women just as it is seen even today in the Hindu families where widowhood is being observed strictly. Similarly the pitiable condition of a man has been described in a simile occurring in the

Ayodhyākānda.¹ The simile is found in the description of Ayodhyā as seen by Bharata when he came from Rāma after their meeting at Citrakūta. It refers to the tragic condition of men when they are under the influence of sorrow. Ayodhyā appeared to Bharata like the unadorned body of a person who was sorrowful for some reason, and who had as it were abstained himself from the application of any paste for soothing the agony and who had been tortured by sorrow. From this description it appears quite plainly that when a person experienced some sort of sorrow he did not use any soothing paste which he usually preferred to apply and he also discarded the decoration made by ornaments. Thus the sorrowful state of his mind would be clearly visible on his person. So this simile shows the general practice of the people in a sorrowful condition.

Among other customs and practices, the practice of keeping pet animals and birds seems to be in vogue in the age of the Rām. There are many references to elephants. There are also such references to horses. In some similes

1. puruṣasyāprahr̥stasya pratis^{nu}uddhān lepanām /
santaptām iva sokena gātrayaṣṭimabhūsanām //

several birds are also mentioned. All such references show that the people were fond of taming animals and birds and keeping them and looking after them at their places. So out of the animals, the elephants, horses, cows, bulls and deer seem to have been tamed and kept in houses, and among birds a parrot seems to be the pet bird as it is specially referred to in the similes. There are also some similes which contain references to the taming of serpents also. Thus the whole picture created by such similes is that of luxurious people entertaining such a practice of having tame animals and birds in their houses. Several similes throw light on the ways and means adopted to catch the animals and to tame them.

Two similes¹, ^{one} ~~are~~ occurring in the Ayodhyākāṇḍa and the other occurring in the Aranyakāṇḍa show how serpents were subjected^{uqa} and tamed. The former of these two ~~similes~~ refers to the king Daśarathāś condition after the announce-

1.(i) asaṃvrtāyām āsīno jagatyām dīrgham ucchvasan /
mandale pa^{vi}ṃṃgo ruddho mantrair iva mahāviṣaḥ //

II.12.4c-5b.

(ii) sā viśīmā śarair bhagnā papāta dharanītam /
gadā mantrasadhabalair vyālīva vinipātītā //

III.29.28.

ment of Kaikeyī's proposals while the latter one describes the breaking of the club of Khara which he threw towards Rāma. The former simile describes how a serpent was subjugated. It seems, from the description given in this simile that a circle - Mandala, was drawn round the serpent and some Mantras were recited. The efficacy of the recitation of such Mantras was such that the serpent could not cross the circle; it was besieged as it were within that circle. It had no course left except to heave long sighs. After this it appears that the serpent could be subjugated and caught however venomous it might be. Similarly the latter simile describes how a female cobra or serpent was subjugated. The description as it refers to the breaking to pieces of the club of Khara, quite indirectly describes the subjugation of such a female serpent. From the expression itself it appears that in order to tame such a female serpent only Mantras were not found sufficient; the reason might be that the female serpents were more dangerous. So to subjugate them, over and above the Mantras, ~~or~~ probably some infatuating and intoxicating medicinal herb must have been used. Thus it appears that for subjugating a female serpent some special process like this must have been resorted to. The purpose for such subjugation and taming of serpents does not become manifest from these references.

But as far as the descriptions stand, it can be safely concluded that such a practice of taming them was certainly in vogue in that age.

As compared to the process for taming serpents that with regard to subjugating wild elephants has been more elaborately dealt with in the similes of the Rāmāyana. The reasons for such an elaborate treatment of this matter are quite plain enough. The elephants were a powerful part of the army and also added a considerable grandeur to the royal possessions. Thus a simile¹ in the Aranyakāṇḍa describes vividly the preliminary process for catching and subjugating a wild elephant. The simile is a speech of Rāma to Lakṣmaṇa. Here he instructs Lakṣmaṇa to dig a great pit for buying the corpse of the demon Virāḍha whom they had already killed. Rāma asks Lakṣmaṇa to dig a great pit for that dangerous demon like one which was usually dug in a forest for a wild and disastrous elephant.

This simile thus indirectly, throws light on the way in which a wild elephant was caught in the age of the

1. Kuñjarasyeṇa raudrasya rākṣasaya lakṣmaṇa /
vane'smin sumahān śvabhraḥ khanyatām raudrakarmaṇah //

Rām. It appears that first of all a great pit was prepared with an expectation that the elephant might unknowingly fall in that pit and then being rendered helpless in that way it could easily be subjugated however wild it might be. Similarly a simile¹ occurring in the Ayodhyākānda throws further light on the process of taming the elephants. The simile occurs in the pathetic situation of the scene of the parting of Rāma to proceed for the forests. The simile describes the tragic cries of the ladies when Daśaratha went to see them. He heard these cries, which were like those of she-elephants when their lord, the big elephant had been captured and tied. The simile just passingly refers to the situation with regard to the capturing of an elephant but it is quite suggestively brought out how the elephants were captured. It also appears that such tying must be a some sort of automatic process, as the description itself suggests, because in the presence of so many she-elephants it could not be possible for the persons to go to the pit and tie the elephant. But there must have been some arrangement of loops done previously by them so that as

1. śuśruve cāgrataḥ strīnāṃ rudantīnāṃ mahāsvanah /
yathā nādaḥ karenūnāṃ baddhe mahati kunjare //

son as the elephant ^{ll} fell in the pit it got itself tied up ^o and in these loops, and such ties must have been strengthened the more, because of the force which the elephant might use to free itself. It seems probable that the female elephants who might realise this calamity had no solution for it and had to give loud shrieks due to pain. This must probably be the preliminary ^a process for subjugating a wild elephant as it appears from the descriptions given in these similes.

It appears from the descriptions given in several similes¹ that different weapons were used for ^{ex} acting work from elephants. These descriptions show that at least three weapons were used to control the elephants. Out of them one

1.(i) na hi tat puruṣavyāghraḥ dukhadam darsanam pitāḥ /
mātus' ca sanitum śaktas totrārdita iva dvīpāḥ //

II.40.42.

(ii) gr̥he gr̥he rudatyas'ca bhartāraṃ gr̥ham āgatam /
vyagarhayanta dukhārata vāgbhis totrair iva dvīpāḥ //

II.48.6.

(iii) iti nāga ivāraṇye tomarāṅkusācoditāḥ /
paptāta bhuvī saṅkrudho niḥśvasanniva pannagāḥ //

II.74.35.

was a good ^a which is referred to as 'totra' the other was tomra - a spear, and the third was a sort of lance, specially made for the purpose of controlling wild elephants. Over and above these three weapons, one more ~~device~~ was also used for the elephants as it appeared ^S in ¹ a simile in the Ayodhayakānda. This was known as ulkā, which ~~did not~~ ^{does not} mean the falling star, as the word generally denotes. But it must be a sort of a fire band used just in order to frighten an elephant and to lead him by the desired way. Sir M. Williams² gives "fire-band" as one of the meanings of the word 'ulkā'. There he gives also the meaning as, "dry grass set on fire." This meaning is also suitable in this case. A big heap of dry grass when set on fire, would be an alarming sight for an elephant. So it appears that an elephant was warded off by these means. The description itself shows that the fire band or a great heap of grass set on fire were meant for an elephant which being maddened

1. (i) narair ivolkābhirapohyamāno

mahāgajo 'dhvānam aupravīṣṭah //

II. 21. 54.

(ii) A Sanskrit English Dictionary p. 218 column 3. by

Srī M. M. Williams.

must have started walking on some public road running a havoc. Thus, these weapons and devices^e seem to have been employed in the age of the Rāmāyaṇa, either for controlling elephants or for warding them off when they appeared mad and dangerous. This device of warding off elephants by fire has been referred to in several other similes¹ also. All these similes occur in the yuddha kāṇḍa and they are speeches of warriors in which they express their desire as to how they wanted to strike their enemies. They express here the idea that their arrows would work as great fire bands which frighten elephants and ward them off. Thus the frequent occurrence of the idea suggests that such a practice must have beenⁱⁿ a vogue in that age, and that appears probable also because elephants when furious

1. (i) kṣīṛam vajropamaih bānair śatadhā kārmuka cyutaih /
rāmam ādīpayiṣyāmi ulkābhiriva kuñjaram //

VI.13.19.

(ii) śarair ā dīpayāmy enam ulkābhir iva kuñjaram /

VI.24.39.cd.

(iii) bhruvor vivyādha bānābhyām ,
ulkābhyām iva kuñjaram /

VI.76.51.cd.

must be a great menace to public safety and such a device to ward them off might have proved efficacious. In the battles also the elephants were a great force, and their likening hinted here in case of the warrior/s also suggests their dangerousness. So to vanquish them the warrior on the opposite side, naturally wished his arrows to be as dangerous as the fire-bands in case of elephants.

Two other similes¹ show that such different weapons were used for horses. The former of these two similes refers to the king Daśaratha when Kaikeyī made here proposals and the latter referred^s to Rāma when Kaikeyī ~~to him~~ announced the sentence of exile, to him. Here the former simile^a shows that a sort of a goḍd was used for a horse. The taunting sarcasm employed by Kaikeyī here, proved to be like that goḍd^a for Daśaratha. The very word 'tunna' shows that the

1.(i) sa tunna iva tikṣṇena pratodena hayottamaḥ /,
rājā pracodito bhikṣṇam kaikeyyā vākyaṃ abravīt //

II.14.23.

(ii) Rāmapyutthāya rājanam Kaikeyyābhipra^coditaḥ /
Kasāyevāhato vājī vanam gantum kṛtavarah //

II.19.18.

^agopd must have been pointed and as soon as it pierced the body of a horse it was at once irritated and infuriated so as to run more quickly. Similarly the latter simile quoted in this connection, suggests that a whip, kasā must have also been used for a horse. The description shows that Kaikeyī's speech appeared to Rāma as if it were a whip employed for striking a horse with it in order to increase its speed. The expression itself suggests that such a whipping proved to be very effective as it is shown here in case of Rāma who became earnest to proceed to leave for the forests as soon as he heard Kaikeyī declaring her proposal which the king had to accept as there was no alternative left for him. So it appears that a ^agopd and a whip were the usual means employed for the horses in the age of the Rām.

There are some references¹ in the Rām. which show that

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1. (i) yathā hypālāḥ paśavo yathā senā hynāyakā /
 yathā candram vinā rātmir yathā gāvo minā vṛsam /
 evaṃ hi bhavitā rāṣṭram yatra rājā na drśyate //

II.14.56c-57d.

- (ii) agopalā yathā gāvastathā rāṣṭramarājakam /

II.67.29cd.

in cattle-breeding was common in the age of the Rām.
just as horses, elephants and some birds were tamed.

The first group of similes contained in II.14.56c-57d is a speech of the the ministers and citizens to the king Daśaratha meant to advise him to expedite the coronation of Rāma as the crown-prince. Similarly the second simile given in II.67.29cd is a speech of Rāma addressed to Bharata wherein he wanted to emphasise the need for the royal administrator of a state. The third simile in this connection occurring in V.5.2cd refers to the sun as seen by Hanumat and the fourth simile given in V.11.10 describes Rāvaṇa as seen by Hanumat when he visited his royal inner-appartments of his palace to search for Sītā.

The first simile refers to the condition of the cattle when they are not taken care of by a shepherd. It declares that a herd of cattle without a shepherd or an

1. (iii) dadarsā dhēmān divi bhāmmantam goṣṭhe vṛṣam iva
bhrah bhramantam /

V.5.2.cd.

(iv) tāsām madhye mahābāhuḥ sūsubhe rākṣaseśvaraḥ /
goṣṭhe mahati mukhyānām gavām madhye yathā vṛṣaḥ //

V.11.10.

army without its commander does not prove useful. This shows that the people used to have cattle and also arranged for a shepherd to look after them. The reference here, further suggests that a territory without a king is just like a night with ^{out} the moon or a herd of cows with ^{out} a bull. This shows that the cows were kept by the people in a herd., and a bull also was kept at least for each herd. The taming of a bull seems to be quite natural when a herd of cows ^{was} kept as tame animals. The person who tamed these animals, naturally wished the propagation of the species of the cattle and for that purpose a male animal was also tamed and kept together with the female animals. So this reference shows that a sense of proper cattle-breeding was there among the people in the age of the Rāmāyana. Similarly the second simile suggests the need of the shepherd when cattle were kept as tame, animals. In the fourth simile Rāvana is likened to a bull among the cows. The third simile which describes the sun, together with the fourth simile describing Rāvana, shows that a proper shade for inhabiting the cows and other cattle was actually built wherever the cattle were tamed and reared. All these similes definitely show that the society was a pastoral society.

Along with these similes some other similes which

describe the use of the cattle for the purpose of vehicle or agriculture are also worth considering.

Two similes¹ occurring in the Ayodhyākāṇḍa, refer to the bullocks yoked to a cart. The former simile contained in II.14.12cd describes the king Daśarātha and the latter is the speech of Bharata to Rāma. The former simile shows that the bullocks were used for carrying carts. Similarly the latter simile expresses Bharata's feelings. He felt the burden of ruling the Kingdom beyond this capacity. So he told Rāma that the burden was worth being carried by a bigger and more capable bullock whereas he felt that he was like a weak bullock and so it was difficult for him to bear that burden. This also shows that the bullocks were used for carrying a cart, and there were classes of bullocks according to their capacity of carrying the burden. A strong bullock was used for carrying more weighty burden of a cart.

Together with these similes which show the existence of the practice of taming the cattle and using them for a

1.(i) sa dhuryo vai pariśpandan yugacakrāntaram yathā /

II.14.12cd.

(ii) soham katham imam bhāram mathā dhuryasamudhrātam/
damyo dhuram ivāsādyā saheyam kenā cañjasā //

II.73.16.

useful purpose, the similes referring to the hunting of the animals are worth considering. These similes show that hunting was a favourite pastime with the people in the age of the Rām. The chase of Rāma after the deer having a golden form is quite well-known. But there is one simile¹ showing how actually a deer was lured and killed. The stanza in which the simile occurs is a speech of Daśaratha to Kaikeyī when she put forth her cruel proposals to the king. He said to the queen that she had been consoling him by false ^osoothing statements. She had actually struck him like a hunter who killed a deer by infatuating it with sweet music. This shows that the method of hunting or killing a deer consideredst of two actions, one was to attract the deer by music and then the second action was to kill it. The love for music in case of the deer is quite well known, and it appears here that the hunters in the age of the Rām. also took this weaknessⁿ of the deer into consideration and took advantage of it. The killing of a deer might have

1. (i) ⁿakṛtair bata māṃ sāntvaiḥ sāntvayatī sma bhāṣase /
gīta s'abdena samrudhya lubho^d mṛgam ivāvadhīḥ //

been pursued by hunters to supply the ~~stain~~ of the deer to the people. Moreover this way of killing a deer is quite widely known and described in the Indian literature. The present reference supplies ~~are~~ more support to the practice of killing a deer in that way.

Similarly one simile¹ occurring in the Aranyakāṇḍa shows how the fish were caught. The simile is a speech of Jaṭāyus to Rāma. He consoles ~~syāing~~ that by kidnapping his beloved wife Jānakī, Rāvana would certainly destroy himself like a large fish which catches the hook in its mouth. This shows how the fish were caught. A hook was prepared, some food to attract fish might have been applied to it in its mouth, it was caught. This practice is found even in the present times. The simile can be taken as a suggestion for the use of fish as food also in the age of the Rām. because there does not seem any other purpose in catching a fish like that.

A reference contained in a simile² occurring in the Sundara-Kāṇḍa, suggests the existence of the practice of

- 1.(i) ^vtrātpriyāṃ ⁱjānakīm ^vhrīṣā ^vrāvāno rākṣases'varah
 jhaṣavad baḍiṣam grhya kṣipram eva vinaśyati //
 III.68.13c-14b.
- (ii) ⁿnūam ⁿlālapyaṭe ⁿsītā pañjarastheva ⁿsārikā /
 janakasya sutā sītā rāmapatnī sumadhyamā //
 V.13.16.

taming a parrot in the age of the Rām. The simile expresses the anxiety of Hanumat about Sītā when he could not find out, at the first instance from the palatial apartment of Lankā. He says here, "I am sure, the daughter of Janaka and the wife of Rāma, is being ^{kept} ~~confined~~ like a she parrot kept in a cage." This shows that the people used to keep parrots or she-parrots in their houses and kept them in a cage as ^{done} ~~is~~ at present.

As regards other references which allude to the social and cultural aspects of the people of the age, it can be said that they cover almost all the walks of life. Thus we get references dealing with law and administration, crime and punishment; trade and navigation, sports and pastime. These references throw much light on these aspects of the social life of the people.

A similar reference¹ contained in the Sundara-kānda suggests the method of inflicting punishment as well as the actual punishment for theft. The stanza in which this simile occurs is a speech of Sītā when she was suffering from the imprisonment in the As'okavanikā. She here expresses

1. du'kham batedaṃ mama du'khitāyā
 māsau cirāyādhigamiṣyato dvaṃ /
 baddhasya vadhyasya yathā nisānte
 rājoparodhād iva taskarasya // V.28.7.

her grief after Rāvana's declaration that he would allow her only two months by which time she must surrender and submit to his proposals ~~surrender-and-submit-to~~ otherwise he would kill her. She here says, "This is verily a misery for me who am already miserable because the two months will pass away after a long time and my condition is like that of a thief who is tied according to the royal orders and is to be killed at the end of night." The stanza brings out Sītā's grief very pathetically. It appears from this speech of Sītā, that the thief who had been caught for his crime was to undergo a rigorous ^{or} imprisonment for the whole night. He was actually tied and then at the day break he was beheaded. All this was carried out in accordance with the royal orders. Of course, for what kind of theft such a hard punishment was enjoined is not clearly mentioned in this passage. But from the trend of the passage, it can be presumed that such a punishment must have been prescribed for a serious crime of theft, as the king himself seems here to issue orders.

Among the other cultural references contained in the similes in the Rām., these alluding to navigation are quite numerous; and the frequency with which they occur cannot be ignored. These references suggest that trade by navigation must have been carried on during the age in which

the Rām. was composed. But before collecting facts from these references, it is worthwhile to take into account the remarks of Dr. Jacobi. He observes¹, " There are many references to ships in the Rāmāyaṇa, but they indicate boats which ply in the rivers. It is so in Rāma's journey by the ganges, and there were boats to go by the rivers; but to conceive ship-voyage from this is still a big step." He further remarks², "To the poet of the Rām. or those with whom the Rāma-legend developed, the same (i.e. ship-voyage) was quite unknown, or it was so little known that the idea of sending Rāma to Laṅkā in a ship did not crop up at all in their minds. If there would have been a definite knowledge of sea voyage, the adventurous task of building of the bridge would not have been resorted to. The jump of Hanumat and Sāgaras' help to Rāma under compulsion would not have been ^Mimagined with respect to a people, in whose stories and legends sea-voyage occurs as a very popular idea."

Prof. Jacobi thinks that there was the total absence of ship voyage in the age of the Rāmāyaṇa. He however admits

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1. The Rāmāyaṇa - Article by Dr. H. Jacobi. Journal of the Oriental Institute, Baroda, 1957-58. Vol. VII. p. 159.
 2. *ibid.* p. 159.

the possibility of the small boats plying in the rivers. But there are many references which suggest the existence of some kind of a regular system of navigation. It may be noted that the Rām. contains many references in which the boat in the sea is mentioned. The poet uses the words like Sāgara, Arnava, etc which can never mean "rivers." It may be assumed in the light of the remarks of Prof. Jacobi that there might not have been a regular system of ship-voyage on a large scale, but there must have been some kind of navigation conducted for varied purposes in the age of the Rāmāyaṇa, because without such an assumption it is difficult to explain the frequent occurrence of the references to the boats in the sea in the Rām.

Now, these references to navigation are contained in many similes¹ in the Rām. They show in quite clear terms

1.(i) tasyaiṣa dharmarājasya dharmarūlā mahātmanah /
paribhamati rājasrīr naur ivākarnikā jale //

II.81.6.

(ii) tām dharsanām adūrasthām drṣtvā cātmani pāthivah /
cinnavagathā pāram nāsasādāplavo yathā //

II.118.36

that navigation was in vogue in the age of the Rām. The description given in these similes shows that these

1. (iii) aśrupūrṇamukhīm dīnām śokabhārābhīpīditām /
vāyuvēgair ivākrāntām majjantīm nāvam^{iv} ārṇave //

III.55.4.

(iv) Sā majjatayavaśaḥ śoke bhārākrānteva naur jale /

IV.7.10cd.

(v) Sa tu vālī pracalitaḥ sālatāḍanavihvalaḥ /

gurubhārasamākrāntā nauḥ sasārtheva sāgare //

IV.16.16cd.16.24cd.

(vi) Sāgare mārutāviṣṭā naur ivāsītadā kapiḥ /

V.1.67cd.

(vii) Samākṣiptośmi sahasā paṅgukṛtaparākramah /

pratilomena vātena mahānaur iva sāgare //

V.1.184.

(viii) Sa dadars'a tataḥ sītām pūrṇacandra nibhānanām /

śokabhārair iva nyastām bhārair nāvam ivāmbhasi //

V.17.3.

(ix) dadarsā sītām dukhārtām nāvam sannām ivārṇave /

V.19.4.cd.

(x) eśālpapūnyā kṛpaṇā vinaśiṣyāmy anāthavat /

samudramadhye nauḥ pūrṇā vāyuvēgair ivāhatā //

V.25.14.

boats were driven by the force of wind and they floated on water. So it seems that these boats had the sails and when wind blow^e, they got puffed with air and the force of the wind drove the boats on th^e water. From some references like that in II.81.6, it appears that the helm or rudder was devised to control^r the boat and to drive it towards the described destination. In II.81.6 it is said that the wealth or splendour of the king^g Dasarath^a was in peril like a boat having lost its helm. So it is quite clear that such helm was provided in case of every boat as other-

1.(xi) es^a vipadyā^ānam alpabhāyā^g,
mahā^rave naur iva mūdhvātā / V.28.8cd.

(xii) S'okasyāsyā kadā pāram rāghavo 'dhigamiṣyati /
plavamānaḥ pariś^rānto hatanauḥ sāgare yathā //
V.37.5.

(xiii) ha^{nu}mān mārutagatir mahānaur iva sāgaram /
apāram aparī^aś^rntaḥ pupluve ga^{gn}gatnāvam //
V.57.4.

(xiv) Senā bhramati saṅkhyeṣu hatakarṇeva naur jale /
VI.48.26cd.

(xv) Kim iyaṃ vyathitā senā mūdhavāteva naurjale /
VI.50.1cd.

wise the boat was sure to lose the direction and would
ply anywhere according to the force and direction of the
wind.

The second simile contained in II.118.36 is a
speech of Sītā to Anasūyā. She describes here how deeply
her father Janaka was grieved and worried about her
marriage when she was ^mature.

She said to Anasūyā that her father was greatly
worried and could not reach the coast of the sea of worry
like a person who had no boat by which he could swim the
waters of the sea. This description shows that the boat
was considered as quite necessary if one wanted to cross
the waters of the sea or the river as the case might be.

From all these similes it appears that the author
chose the boat as the upamāna to describe the characters
in some adverse conditions.

The third simile in this connection contained in
III.55.4 refers to Sītā entangled in a tragic situation.
She was all ^{alone} ~~above~~ in the hermitage and at that time Rāvana
approached her with a wanton desire to kidnap her. The
poet compares her to a boat which is being sunk in a sea
on account of its being attacked by the speed of the

rushing wind. Her face was besmeared with tears; she felt nervous as she was alone in that situation and the burden and pressure of sorrow overpowered her very much. The comparison of Sītā with a boat sinking in a sea is quite befitting the situation. The fourth simile given in IV. 7.10 is the speech of Sugrīva to Rāma in which he describes the condition of a weak person who succumbs to the danger of a sorrowful situation. He says that such a person draws himself in sorrow like a boat which is overpowered by the burden of the load which it carries. The fifth simile describes Vālin in a pitiable condition of being severely wounded. He also appeared sinking due to weakness like a boat sinking in a sea due to heavy load. The sixth simile given in V.1.67cd and the sixth one given in V.1.184 describe Hanumat. The former is a mere description while the latter is a speech of Hanumat. The former simile describes Hanumat as a boat over-powered by wind in a sea while in the latter he says that he felt as if he were thrown, all of a sudden in perilous condition like a boat which had been attacked by opposite and unfavourable wind. This shows that in the age of the Rāmāyana, the importance of a favourable wind was considered as an important factor in the matter of sailing by a boat. Similarly the similes given in IV.16.24 suggests that there must have been some notion about the amount of load to be embarked in a ship. Some fixed amount

of weight must have been allowed to be carried as otherwise the boat would surely sink. The eighth simile contained in V.17.3. which is the description of Sītā as seen by Hanumat also suggests the same thing. She appeared to Hanumat as fully overpowered by the burden of sorrow, like a boat which had been loaded up to its capacity. Similarly the ninth simile also refers to Sītā; and here she is compared to a boat sinking in a sea. The tenth and eleventh similes occurring in V.25.14 and V.28.8cd are speeches by Sītā describing her^h condition. In both these similes she compares herself to a boat being driven away by a strong wind. The ^etwelfth simile given V.37.5 is a speech of Sītā to Hanumat. Here she says expressing her anxiety for Rāma in trying to ^{cu}rescue her, that it is difficult to imagine as to when and how Rāma would cross the sorrow and would come out of it like a person whose boat has already wrecked and who being continuously swimming feels exhausted in a sea. This simile also, like that in II.118.36 hints at the impossibility of crossing a big distance on the surface of water without the aid of a boat. The last two ~~and~~ similes given in VI.48.26cd and VI.50.1cd describe the condition of an army. Out of these two similes, the one in VI.48.26cd refers to a boat without helm as a ^{standard}~~standard~~ of comparison. So all these similes which refer to boats plying on a river or a sea suggest the existence of the practice

of plying by boats. The descriptions given here clearly show that the people had ~~clearly show that the people~~ had definite idea of navigation, and must have resorted to it to cross the rivers and to go to different places along the coast. It cannot be said that there was a regular system of ship-voyage, on the strength of such meagre data. But it can be safely concluded that the frequent occurrence of boats ~~and~~ their sailing in rivers or a sea do suggest that the people actually moved from one place to another by boats when it was felt necessary.

There are some similes which refer to the several crafts and arts of the Rām. age. Thus there are similes which refer to chariots and the driving of chariots, arrows and archery, sculpture and such other arts. A simile¹ occurring in the Aranyakāṇḍa refers to the condition of chariots which are driven on an uneven ground. The simile occurs^s in a stanza addressed by Mārīca to Rāvaṇa. Here he advises him to be more considerate and not to act hastily and rashly. While pointing out the dangers of such a rash dealing in the matter of administration. He says that

1. ye tikṣṇamantrāḥ sacivā bhajyante saḥ ten vai /
viṣameṣu rathāḥ sīghrā mandasārathayo yathā //

the king should ordinarily act in accordance with the advice of his ministers. But when his ministers are rash and advise him to act in their own ways, he should think himself and act. He says the rash ministers are doomed as soon as the disastrous results of their policy be fall them as well as their ruler like the chariots which are driven on uneven ground, and are destroyed because they have a great speed and the controlling charioteers are dull. Then the destruction of the chariots issue. This simile gives a side light as it were on the concept of the proper administration of a state in the age of the Rām. It shows that the science of driving vehicles like chariot was widely known, as it appears here because the illustration is chosen from the idea about the proper driving of chariots to explain the proper administration. It also suggests that the driver of a chariot was required to be alert and he must be familiar with the ground on which he drove his chariot because there was the sure danger of the chariot being shattered to pieces if he could not control the speed.

Similarly another simile¹ occurring in the Sundara-

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1. Sanniyacchati me krodham tvayi kāmah Samu¹tthitah /
dravato mārgam āsādyā hayān iva susārathih //

kānda shows how a good charioteer is useful in the proper driving of a chariot. The simile is a speech of Rāvana to Sītā. He explains her as to why he controls his wrath towards her. He says, "The love which I have for you checks my wrath like a good charioteer who controls the horses which while running go out of the way". This shows that a good charioteer^e was required to see that the horses run through the proper path. He must control them when they run astray. Moreover it appears that there must have been good and well constructed roads also, and the chariots were run on these roads and not anywhere else. The charioteer must be skilful to check the horses as soon as they leave the road and move unevenly. This simile together with that in III.41.12 shows that the practice of moving by the chariots must have been prevalent in the age of the Rām. and regarding the selection of a charioteer, the proper way on which the chariot should be run and the proper controlling of the horses were also taken into consideration.

The poet has taken an arrow discharged and thrown off from a bow as upamāna in three similes¹. His purpose

1. (i) vanāni saritaḥ saikān sarāmsi ca viḥayasā /
sa kṣipramatīyāya śarascāpādiḥa cyutaḥ // III.54.7c-8b.
- (ii) jyāmukta iva nārācaḥ pupluve yṛkṣavātikām / V.14.4cd.
- (iii) jyāmukta iva nārāco mahāvegōbhyaḥ pāgataḥ / V.57.14.ab.

seems to describe the speed of the object under consideration. The first simile contained in III.54.7c-8b describes Rāvana crossing many forests, rivers and lakes through the aerial route while he kidnapping Sītā. The two similes occurring in V.14.4cd and V.57.14ab refer to Hanumat floating in the air with a great speed. In all these similes the arrows going with a high speed are taken as the upamāna and it shows that such a speed of the arrows must have been taken as an ideal for every person who wanted to have mastery over archery.

It appears from some references in the similes of the Ram. that drinking might have been in vogue. These similes¹ contained in II.12.76 and II.12.78 occur in the

1.(i) Satīm tvām aham atyantam vyavasyāmy asatīm satīm /
rūpinīm viśasamyuktām pītveva madirām narah //

II.12.76

(ii) anārya iti mām āryāḥ putravikrayiṇam dhruvam /
dhikkariṣyanti rathyāsu sūrāpaṃ brāhmaṇam yathā //

II.12.78

(iii) tathā hyāttam idam rājyam hṛtasārām surām iva /
nābhimantum alam rāmo naṣṭasomam ivādhvaram //

II.61.18

course of the speech of Daśaratha to Kaikeyī after hearing her drastic proposals, while the simile occurring in II.61.15 is a speech of Kausalyā to Daśaratha. The remaining two similes contained in II.114.14 and VII.42.18c-19b are descriptions, the former refers to Ayodhyā as seen by Bharata when he returned from Citrakūṭa and latter refers to the pleasures of Rāma and Sītā after the coronation of Rāma on the throne of Ayodhyā.

Daśaratha rebuked Kaikeyī saying that she was really a bad woman and he had taken her to be good through mistake like a person who had taken poisoned liquor which appeared fine and attractive. This shows that the person who wanted to drink was first enamoured by the attractive colour of the liquor and as soon as he took it he lost his senses and could not think what was bad and what was good, what was right and what was wrong.

In her speech Kausalyā tells Daśaratha how unwelcome

1.(iv) Kṣīṇa pānottamair bhinnaiḥ s'arāvair abhisamvṛtām /
gataśauṇḍām iva dhvastām pānabhūmiḥ asaṃskṛtām //

II.114.14.

(v) sītām ādāya hasten^a madhu maireyakam śuci /
pāyayāmāsa kākutsthaḥ śacīm iva purandaraḥ //

VII.42.18c-19b.

the kingdom would be for Rāma when he would get it back from Bharata after the lapse of so many years. It would be just like liquor the essence of which had already been taken off or like a ~~scientific~~ sacrifice which was devoid of Soma. Here it appears that the liquor having its essence fully in itself must have been considered as a relishing drink and conversely if the liquor was without its essence it would be quite useless.

The fourth simile occurring in II.114.14 gives many details about drinking, the utensils used for it and the place where people used to have drinks. Ayodhyā appeared to Bharata as a place of drinking - a shop of liquor having lost all its glamour and glory. It appeared to him as a place of drinking which was devoid of beautiful decoration, around which the broken vessels used for drinking were scattered, in which the best drinks were already exhausted; and which was left by the owner of the shops. Here it appears that there might have been fixed places where the people went to have drinks. They used to drink in pots and after using them threw them away. The place of drinking used to be decorated well in order to attract people. It appears from the description that these shops contained various kinds of liquors.

The simile in VII.42.18c-19b refers to the pleasures of Rāma and Sītā. The poet here describes how they enjoyed after coronation. The poet here says that Rāma himself took the bowl of the pure Maireyaka liquor and gave it to Sītā for drinking it like Indra offering a cup¹ of liquor to his beloved wife Śacī. Here the word Maireyaka is important. It seems to be a special kind of delicious drink. Prof. M. Williams¹ thinks it to be a drink made from a combination of Surā and Āsava. He is perhaps right because the author here appears to use that word as a special proper name of some kind of drink and not as an ordinary common noun. From the description it appears that in the royal families the drinks of the best qualities were taken.

The simile occurring in II.12.78 is more important because it has a considerable bearing upon the society of that age. In this stanza Daśaratha says to Kaikeyī as to how he would be condemned and censured if he accepted her proposals. He tells her that the Āryas i.e. noble persons would consider him as Anārya who had been so mean

1. Sanskrit-English Dictionary. p.834. column ³ by
M.M. Williams.

as to sell off his son and that they would shower cries of fire upon him in public as if he was like a Brahmin who had taken liquor. This suggestion of the pitiable plight of Daśaratha envisaged by himself throws much light upon the then society. It appears that all classes of people could easily indulge in drinking in that age. But if a Brahmin took to drinking it was considered a great crime on his part. There is no evidence in the Rām. itself to show as to what punishment was inflicted upon such a Brahmin who proved to be a drunkard. But from the description given here, it is evident that his social status was at once reduced to nothing. He became an object of strong public criticism. Moreover the evil of drinking was such that the person might go to the extent of ruining himself as well as his family and the Brahmins being the upper-most class of the society any heinous action on their part might have been rightly condemned by the general public. Thus this simile shows that the people of other castes excepting Brahmins could usually take to drinking. But it also suggests that the people were fully conscious of the moral laws of the society.

In the Rāmāyana, there are some similes¹ which suggest

1. (i) katham ātmasutān hitvā trāyasēnyasutam vibho /
akāryam iva paśyāmah svamānsam iva bhojane //

that meat was taken as food in the age of the Rām. The simile contained in I.62.14 is a speech of the sons of the sage Viśvāmitra to their father when he became ready to save Śunahśepa from being offered as a sacrifice, even at the cost of his own sons; while the second simile occurring in the I.62.17 is a curse inflicted by Viśvāmitra on his sons who refused to help him in his meritorious action of saving Śunahśepa. The third simile given in VI.12.34cd is a speech of Kumbhakarna to Rāvana.

In the first simile, the sons of Viśvāmitra say to their father that his action of saving somebody's son at the cost of his own sons was quite unworthy like the meat of a dog in the matter of food. This probably shows that the meat of dog was considered as totally useless for being taken as food. The curse of Viśvāmitra definitely shows that there was a class of people which indulged in the heinous action of taking the meat of dogs as food. Here Viśvāmitra terms them as Vāsiṣṭhas. It may appear that he used this term on account of his enmity with Vasīṣṭha.

(ii) śvamānasbhojinah sarve vāsiṣṭhā iva jātiṣu /
pūrṇam varṣasahasraṃ tu pṛthivyāṃ anuṣṭasyatha //

I.62.17.

(iii) diṣṭyā tvam nāvadhīd rāmo viṣyamīśram ivāmiśam /

VI.12.34cd.

The third simile which is a speech of Kumbhakarna to Ravana suggests that meat, *Amisa* was used as food. It also suggests that the people used to take care lest such meat should turn harmful due to some sort of poisonous effect. Thus all these similes hint at some practice of taking meat as food, and further suggest that the meat of a *gog* was most harmful. The fact that meat was taken as food seems to be supported by one more reference¹ occurring in the *Ayodhyākāṇḍa*. The line containing the simile occurring in II.48.28cd is a speech of the ladies of *Ayodhyā* to their husbands who returned after *Rāma*'s departure for the forests. They here bring out their would-be miserable condition when *Bharata* became the ruler. They say that their condition would be like that of the animals entrusted to the care of a butcher. This line, thus shows that some persons might be following the vocation of butchery, and might be slaughtering animals. Such a slaughter of animals seems to be meaningless, if we do not assume that the animals might have been slaughtered for supplying meat as food.

1. *bharate saⁿⁱsrstāh smah saunikā^e pasavo yathā /*

Some similes¹ in the Rām. throw light on the system of education in the age. These references show how education was imparted, who were entitled to receive it and what was the method of imparting. These references are significant as they furnish information about the particular stage² in the system of education in ancient India. Dr. Radhakumud Mookerji admits that Ayodhyā was a centre of culture and opines, "The educational and cultural conditions of the country in that age are seen at their best at Ayodhyā, the capital of kings Dasāratha and Rāma."

1. (i) aham tām ānayaṣyāmi naṣṭām vedasrutim yathā /
IV.6.5ab.

(ii) tasya sandidihe buddhir muhuḥ sītām nirikṣya tu /
ānāyānām ayogena vidyām prasīthilām iva //
V.15.38

(iii) aham aupayikā bhāryā tasyaiva vasudhāpateḥ /
vratasnātasya viprasya vidyeva viditātmanah //
V.21.17c-18b

(iv) bhāvam na cāsīdāham anupradātum alam
dviḥ mantram ivādvijāya / V.28.5cd.

2. Ancient Indian Education (Brahmanical and Buddhist).,
p. 343, by Dr. Radhakumud Mookerji.

The first simile occurring in IV.6.5ab which is a speech of Sugrīva addressed to Rāma, shows the zeal of the people for preserving the sacred texts of the Vedas which have been considered as a ~~very early~~ store-house of knowledge from very early times. Here Sugrīva wants to say to Rāma that he would leave no effort undone to find out Sītā and promises that he would bring her like a Vedasruti i.e. some text of the Veda which is lost; even though she might be in heaven or in the nether world. This shows what a great esteem the people entertained for the Vedas. If by some misfortune a Sruti of a Veda were lost the people would be ready to undertake any pains for its recovery.

The second simile contained in V.15.38 shows the reactions of Hanumat when he happened to see Sītā for the first time in the Asakavanikā. He felt himself doubtful regarding the identity of the lady with Sītā as he knew from the descriptions given by Rāma. His intellect failed to give him proper solution of the doubt; he hesitated for a while on seeing Sītā. The poet says that his intellect started hesitating when he saw Sītā like the knowledge which becomes loose i.e. unsound on account of the loss of practice of going through the ~~manāyas~~ ^m Anunāyas. The ^m Anunāya was a general term given to the Vedas. So here the

simile suggests that in the age of the Rām. the daily recitation of the Vedas was considered as highly commendable. If a student wanted to be proficient in his studies he must invariably recite the sacred texts daily without fail, and if he did not recite it, the danger of forgetting them was there. It can be easily understood that this emphasis on the practice of recitation must be due to the method of oral transmission of the knowledge because writing does not seem to have been in vogue at that time. So it appears that the students might have been engaged in such daily recitations of the Vedas or for the matter of that whatever portion or whatever branch of knowledge they might undertake to study.

The third simile given in V.21.17c-18b is a speech of Sītā addressed to Rāvana. She told him that she was the most chaste wife of that lord of earth namely Rāma like the knowledge which retains with a Brahmin who after completely observing the vow of celibacy took the sanctified bath to mark the culmination of the duration of his study and who had fully known his own self and had digested whatever he learnt as a student. This shows that the student was required to go to his preceptor's hermitage, observe a vow of celibacy throughout the whole course of his studies.

He was required to perform the ceremony of the sacred bath, which marked that he graduated himself and the fruitful culmination of his years of laborious studies was reached by him. It appears that a student was required to know about philosophy, especially metaphysics as the term 'Viditātmanah' used in this stanza suggests. So it can be assumed that this knowledge about Ātman was considered as a necessary qualification in the case of a learned person. Thus this simile shows the stages in the system of education. It shows that it was believed that after such a rigorous course of study the student knew fully well whatever he learnt and it was only in case of such students that the knowledge remained with them like a faithful wife remaining attached to her husband as it is described by Sītā in this stanza.

The fourth simile occurring in V.28.5cd is a soliloquy of Sītā. The stanza describes her reaction to ^{wards} the threat of Rāvana and it also gives an idea of her mind. She might have thought over his threat and then she must have decided not to submit to his will. Here she expresses her sheer inability to yield to the desires of Rāvana. She says that she is utterly incapable of accepting his feelings or passions towards her, she cannot reciprocate love or

feelings to him like a dvija - a person from the higher caste not being willing to impart a mantra to an advija - a person belonging to a lower caste. This shows that education was restricted to the upper three caste viz. Brahmins, Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas and it was not extended to the Sūdras who were considered as Advijas because they were not granted the right to ^{ti}invitation - i.e. upanayana. Thus these similes show how the education was imparted and to whom it was given as a matter of right.

The similes in the Rām. show that the people had the knowledge of medicines, their application and use^d and the ^adiagnosis of various diseases. Some other similes also show that the people had the idea about the treatment of diseased persons; and also felt that a proper nursing was essential for a patient. Some ^{which}similes suggest the existence of some practices of surgery are really valuable because they show how the knowledge of medical science was widely prevalent in the age of the Rām., and on that account the existence of a **fairly** developed medical system can also be easily envisaged.

Thus there are several ¹similes which are worthy of note in this connection. The first simile in this connection

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1. (i) vīryahīnam ivāśaktam kṣātradharmeṇa bhārgava /
avajānāsi me tejah pasya meḍya parākramam // I.76.3.

given in I.76.3 is a speech of Rāma to Parasurāma. The second simile occurring in II.12.55ab describes Daśaratha. The third simile occurring in II.12.70c-71b is a speech of Daśaratha addressed to Kaikeyī; while the fourth simile given in II.64.59 is a speech of Daśaratha to Kausalyā.

(ii) nastacitto yathonmatto viparīto yathā^tpurah /
II.12.55ab.

(iii) idānim tat tapati mām yan mayā sukṛtaṃ tvayi /
apathyavyañjanopetaṃ bhuktaṃnam ivāturaṃ //
II.12.70c-71b.

(iv) tasyāyaṃ karmano devi vipākaḥ samutthitaḥ /
apathyaiḥ saha sambhukto vyādhir annaraso yathā //
II.64.59.

(v) akāryaṃ kāryasaṅkāśaṃ apathyāṃ pa^mthyasamukṛitaṃ /
II.109.2cd.

(vi) nūnaṃ mamāṅgāny acirād anāryaḥ
śastraiḥ śitais chetsyati rākṣasendraḥ /
tasminnanāgacchati lokanāthe
garbhasthajan̄tor iva sālyekṛtaḥ //
V.28.6.

(vii) etena khalu jīviṣye bheṣajenāturo yathā /
V.66.14cd.

(viii) kadā nu cārubimboṣṭhaṃ tasyā padmaṃ ivānaṃ /
īśad unnamya pāsyāmi rasāyanam ivāturaḥ // VI.5.13.

The fifth simile occurring in II.109.2cd is a speech of Rāma addressed to a sage named Jābāli. Similarly the seventh and eighth similes occurring in V.66.14cd and VI.5.13 respectively are the speeches of Rāma. The sixth simile contained in V.28.6 is a speech of Sītā in which

(ix) sa ca na pratijagrāha rāvanah kak kālacoditah /
ucyamānam hitam vākyaṃ viparīta ivaśadham //

VI.17.15.

(x) kālāḥ kāñcana-sannāhās tasmīn tamasi rākṣasāḥ /
samprādrśyanta śailendrā dīptaśadhivanā iva //

VI.44.5

(xi) tāni nirdahyamānāni dūrataḥ pracakāśire /
himavacchikharānīva dīptaśadhivanāni ca //

VI.75.24c-25b.

(xii) dīpo netrāturasyeva pratikulāsi me dr̥ḥam /

VI.118.17cd

(xiii) trayah sukeśasya sutās tretāgnisamā tejasah /
vivrd̥dhim agamans tatra vyādhayopekṣitā iva //

VII.5.8c-9b.

she expresses her grief. The ninth simile given in VI.17.15 describes Rāvana. The tenth simile contained in VI.44.5 describes the demons as seen shining in darkness due to their armour. The eleventh simile occurring in VI.75.24c-25b describes the mansions of Lankā blazing with the flames of fire, and the thirteenth simile given in VII.5.8c-9b describes the three sons of a demon named Sukeśa while the twelfth simile contained in VI.118.17cd is a speech of Rāma addressed to Sītā before her fire-ordeal.

The speech of Rāma in which he says ~~to~~ Parasurāma about his strength shows the general characteristics of a person suffering from general debility. A person due to the loss of semen on which depends the strength of a person appears quite feeble and unable to undertake any work. Rāma charges here Parasurāma for believing him to be like such a feeble man. This suggests that people knew the importance of semen in the body and the need of preserving it which would result in the storing of strength and vigour. The second simile which describes Dasaratha's condition after hearing Kaikeyi's proposals aims at putting forth the symptoms of madness and some kind of relapse of a disease. A sure sign of madness seems to be the loss of senses. The drastic proposals of Kaikeyi

worked on him as a paralytic attack^k. This shows that the knowledge about the symptoms of madness and relapse of some disease might have been accessible to the people and they could easily recognise the symptoms of such madness. Similarly the simile occurring in VI.118.14cd refers to some disease of eyes. In it the hint regarding the care to be taken for a patient suffering from the disease is given. It expressly states that light is unfavourable to a patient suffering from eye-trouble. It also suggests the method of treatment in such cases. To give a proper treatment to such a patient, it must have been specially seen that no unfavourable light was brought near the patient lest he should suffer from some more pain. The other similes given in II.12.70c-71b, II.64.59, II.109.2cd deal with the Pathya (beneficial) and Apathya (dangerous) food. In case of patients suffering from some diseases care about food is absolutely essential. Here in these similes the drastic effects of taking Apathya^t food, i.e. the food not favourable to a patient suffering from a particular disease are described. The simile occurring in II.12.70c-71b suggests that a particular kind of food was allowed for some disease. If some discrepancy^r occurred in the food it created a bad^a effect on the patient. Here the material as well as the food are also hinted by the use

of the word 'Vañjana' - This shows that the food was to be prepared with great care. The word 'Vyañjana' means a 'sauce' or 'condiment' so its very presence here in this line suggests that the care was desired in case of the utensils also while preparing the food for a patient. This shows the high standard of treatment given to a patient. The simile given in II.64.59 suggests that proper care for food was considered as necessary in case of a patient. If the food mixed with Apā^thya elements or things was devoured by a patient, the dangerous effects of a disease were all the more powerful and instead of the disease being checked it increased on its own accord. The simile occurring II.109 2cd also suggests the same thing i.e. the necessity of a proper discrimination between Pa^thya and Apā^thya food. If such a discrimination was not exercised the effects would be ^{harmful} beautify^t.

The two similes occurring in V.66.14cd and VI.17.15 emphasise the importance of medicine in the course of the medical treatment. In V.66.14cd Rāma asks Hanumat to tell him whatever Sitā might have told him when he saw her in Lañkā because that would infuse life in him, he would subsist on it and carry on with his misery facing it bravely just like a diseased person who subsists on the strength

of medicine and gathers strength to face a disease. This shows that in the age of the Rām. the people took care in the choice of medicine and the best possible medicine was given to a patient so that he might feel vigour and vitality in his body. The simile in VI.17.15 on the other hand shows that a person who felt disgusted with the medicine, refused to accept it even though it might be very efficacious. The simile further suggests that such an aversion to the medicine if found in a patient was a sure sign of his fall, he would surely die.

The speech of Rāma contained in VI.5.13 expresses his longing to effect union with Sītā. But it shows that some sort of mixture was used as a medicine to be given to a patient. In this reference the word 'Rasāyana' is used, & this might be a term applied to some drug made out of a combination of some medicines calculated to prolong life. The reference gives us some information regarding the development of the medical science of that age. The similes in VI.44.5 and VI.75.24c-25b suggests that the knowledge of medicinal herbs growing on mountains was current among the people. In the former simile the demons with their armour shining in the darkness of night are described while in the latter VI.75.24c-25b the palatial buildings, of Lañkā are described when they were encircled by the flames of fire.

In it the buildings are compared to the peaks of the Himalayas shining due to the growth of the medical plants on them. Both these similes furnish a proof of the existence of the knowledge of the medicinal plants among the people who might have followed some sort of medical profession. They also suggest that the knowledge of the botanical science was in vogue in the age of the Rāmāyana.

The simile in V.28.6 which is a speech of Sītā expresses her anxiety in the face of Rāvaṇa's threat that she would get her body cut to pieces if she did not surrender herself to his wishes within the period of two months. But by the bye it gives a proof for the existence of some kind of surgery. It seems that here a sort of operation done for bringing out a baby from the womb is referred to. The description shows that the instrument used for such an operation was a pointed one because the word 'śālya'- is used here. It appears from the trend of the passage that a cut was made as a preliminary step for such an operation. After making that cut the other loosely hanging parts of the body of newly born baby were severed by sharp instruments. The single reference contained in this stanza cannot be taken as a proof for the development of the science of surgery as a whole in its systematic form as we have

it to-day. But it can be assured^u safely that the reference does suggest the existence of a practice of surgery.

There are references¹ contained in the similes in the Rāmāyana, which show that the people followed the vocation of farmers and the cultivation of land was common in the age. The references dealing with the cattle-breeding

1. (i) abhivarsati kāmair yah parjanyaḥ prthivīm iva /
sa kāmapāsāparyasto mahātejā mahīpatiḥ //

II.31.12.

(ii) agastyam kauśikam caiva tāvubhaḥ^u brāhmanottamaḥ^u /
ardrayāhūya^c samitre ratnaih^u sasyam ivāmbubnih //

II.32.13

(iii) hanyamānam tu tat sainyaṃ paśyāmi śaravṛṣṭibhiḥ /
indrenevottamam sasyam āhatam tvaśmarṛṣṭibhiḥ //

III.34.8

(iv) vātātapakiāntam iva praṇastam varṣena bījam
pratisañjāharsa /

V.29.6cd.

(v) tvām drṣtvā priyavaktāram samprahrṣyāmi vānara /
ardhasañjātasasyeva vṛṣṭim[†] prāpya vasundharā //

V.40.2.

are also there. (Vide supra p. 427). Now, these references which describe the practices of cultivation and agriculture show the pastoral character of the civilisation in the age of the Rāmāyana.

The first simile contained in II.31.12 refers to Das'aratha. The second simile given in II.32.13 is a speech of Rāma addressed to Lakṣmana; while the third simile occurring in III.34.8 is a speech of Sūrapanakhā to Rāvana and the fourth simile contained in V.29.6cd describes Sītā. The fifth simile occurring in V.40.2 is a speech of Sītā addressed to Hanumat.

The first simile quoted in this connection shows that the rains were looked upon as very essential, as if they were a blessing to the people. They believed that the rains fulfilled all their wishes. The second simile given in II.62.13 gives the belief of the people regarding the growth of crops. It was conceived that the rains were necessary for the speedy growth of the crops. The fourth simile given in V.29.6cd which describes the good omens experienced by Sītā before she happened to see Hanumat, the welcome messenger from her husband, tells how a seed found its growth. It also shows the exact knowledge of the people about agricultural method. According to the general

practice in agriculture merely tilling the land is not sufficient. After such tilling the showers of rain are very essential. These showers of rain nourish the seed and help its growth even when it is under the ground. Here it is stated that a shower of rain helps the growth of a seed which seems to have been destroyed apparently on account of the storm of wind and scorching heat. Thus it appears that in the system of agriculture which seems to have been in vogue in the age of the Rām., the rain played a very important role as at present. The capacity of quickening the growth of crop, was believed to be invariably due to rain. The fifth simile occurring in V.40.2 which is a speech of Sītā addressed to Hanumat expresses the joy felt by her on seeing him. The simile gives more details about the system of agriculture and the idea of the people about it. It appears that the land was first cultivated, then the seeds were sown. The rains helped the growth of the seeds. But the earlier rains of the season helped the growth of the crops just the half way. For the complete growth of the crops the rains at the end of the season were also necessary because they helped the complete growth of the crops.

The ~~w~~ third simile occurring in III.34.8 refers to a danger which is felt very much for the crops. *Sūrpanakha*

~~she~~ says here describing the attack of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa on the armies of the demons in the Dandakāraṇya that she ~~felt~~ feels the destruction of the army effected by incessant shower of arrows thrown by Rāma. She further points out that the shower of the arrows was like a shower of hails on the fields which are full of crops such a shower proved a ~~last~~ing and destructive blow to the crops. This shows that the extreme cold which made the water of the rain freeze and assume solidified form, did much harm to the crops instead of yielding any good result. This danger from hails or excessive cold is a great impending menace felt as such by the farmers for their crops. This shows that the farmers in the age of the Rām. felt just like the farmers of to-day regarding hails and excessive cold.

All these similes show that the system of agriculture was almost the same as it is in vogue in the present times in India. There are no references to a regular system of irrigation or well constructed canals for watering the fields. This also further proves that the system of agriculture as presented by these references was more of a primary type and not a well designed and modern one furnished with scientific equipment and proper irrigation.

There are similes¹ in the Rām. which show that the people had advanced, and could have nice buildings and well constructed roads and such other things. These references show that in the age of the Rām. buildings, gardens, tanks, wells, lakes etc. were constructed.

1.(i) tad adrikūṭācala megha sannibham

mahā vimāno^{tt} Hama vesma saṅghavat /
avāryamaṇaḥ praviveśa sārathih,
prabhūtaratnam makaro yathārṇavam //

II.15149.

(ii) prabhinna taṭa vistīrṇam vāpīm iva hṛtotpalām /

II.114.18cd.

(iii) amī mayūrāḥ śobhante pranṛtyantas tatastataḥ /

svaiḥ pakṣaiḥ pavanoddhū^tair gavākṣaiḥ sphāṭikair iva/

IV.1.36c-37b.

(iv) cakravākīva bharaṭāram pṛsthato 'nugatā vanam /

viśamaṁ daṇḍakāraṇyam udyānam iva yāṅganā //

IV.30.65

(v) aśobhata mahāsetuḥ sⁱmanta iva sāgare/

VI.22.80cd.

(vi) vajra^mustis tu maindena^m puṣṭinā nihato rane /

papāta sarathah sāśvaḥ purāṭṭa iva bhūtale //VI.43.30.

(vii) Sarasīva mahāgharme sūpakṣiṇe babhūvatuḥ /

VI.98.1cd.

The first simile occurring in II.15.49 describes the palace of Rāma in full details. The second simile describes a Vāpī i.e. a well or pond so constructed that the water could be reached by a series of steps. The third simile contained in IV.1.36c-37b is a description of the dancing peacocks given by Rāma to Lakṣmana.

The fourth simile occurring in IV.30.65 which refers to Sītā, compares the Dandakāraṇya to a garden. The fifth simile contained in VI.22.80cd describes the big bridge over the sea constructed by Nala. The sixth simile given in VI.43.30 which describes the fall of a demon refers to the terrace of a building as upamāna, while the seventh simile occurring in VI.98.1cd refers to ~~the~~ some lakes as a standard of comparison.

The first simile given in II.15.49 describes the palace of Rāma as seen by Sumantra when he entered it to convey the message of ~~the~~ king Daśaratha to Rāma. The Roet says that the palace was shining like a cloud resting on the peak of a mountain. It was not a single building. But it was a group of buildings, which were very high. Sumantra entered it like a crocodile entering a sea which is abundant with jewels. Here the word 'mahāvīmānottamveśma'

is important. Prof. M.M. Williams¹ explains the word saying "Other descriptions make the vimāna more like a house or palace, and one kind is said to be 7 stories high." He also further writes explaining the word, "a seven storied palace or tower, R". It seems that Prof. Williams thinks the word 'Vimāna' in the Rāmāyana means a building, 7 stories high. So it can be assumed that here also, the word means that the buildings were seven storied and as the trend of the passage suggests the palace of Rāma did not consist of such a single building, but it had a group of such buildings. If that was so the present passage brings out really the idea as to what height of architecture and sculpture the people in the age of the Rāmāyana had reached.

The word 'adrikūtācalamegha - sanⁿibham' suggests the height of the building.

The second simile in this connection describes Ayodhyā as seen by Bharata after his return from Citrakūta. To describe the gloomy condition of the city the poet takes up Vāpi - a pond having its banks broken as a standard of

1. A Sanskrit - English Dictionary - p.980 column 1. by Prof. Monier Williams

comparison. This suggests, that the construction of such a vāpi or pond was in vogue in the age of the Rām. The third simile describing the dancing peacocks refers to the windows made of crystal. The poet says that the dancing peacocks with their wings spread, appeared like the windows made of crystal, through which the wind kept on blowing. The word 'gavākṣa' used here means a window having lattice so this reference can be taken to show that in the construction of buildings such latticed windows were made, and in case of some rich and grand buildings crystal ^{was} also used for the construction of such windows. The reference shows an advance in the architecture of that age as well the grandeur in the construction of the buildings. The fourth simile given in IV.30.65 refers to a garden as upamāna. The beautiful description of As'okavanikā in the Śundarakānda is an exceptionally grand picture of an enormous garden. But here the reference can be taken to show that the gardens were constructed in the cities in the age of the Rām. and the ladies used to pay visits to them. The sixth simile refers to a high building just as the first simile suggests the construction of such high buildings. But the word 'atta' used in this stanza is significant; it suggests

that high towers or terraces were constructed in the buildings. The fall of the demon Vajra^{musti} is compared to the fall of such a tower or the terrace from a building.

The fifth simile describes the grand bridge constructed over the sea by the monkeys. This and several other descriptions of that bridge may appear as purely imaginary. But this reference can be taken at least as a proof to show that the bridges were constructed in that age, and if that was so, it speaks for the skill in engineering. The seventh simile given in VI.98.1cd describes the lakes being dried in the summer. As a sidelight from the reference it can be presumed that at least some construction like tanks or big ponds was in vogue in the age of the Rāmāyana. Thus all these similes which refer to the constructions of buildings, bridges, gardens and such other things suggest that the society was ⁱⁿ an advanced stage and the arts and sciences of architecture and sculpture were developed and cultivated in the age of the Rām.

In some similes¹ of the Rām. the mountain are

1. (i) ātmajānām ca ratnānām bhūṣito bhūṣaṅttamaih /
dhātubhiḥ manditah śailo vividhair himvāniva //

represented as containing metals. Such references may probably be understood to show that the knowledge of minerals and their sources was current among the people in the age of the Rām.

The first simile contained in VI.22.20c-21b describes the personified form of the sea as it appeared before Rāma to pacify his wrath. The second simile occurring VI.69.87cd describes Angada; while the third simile given in VI.108.26 describes Rāvaṇa. All these similes refer to the mountains as a repository of metals. This shows that the people in the age of the Rām. knew about the metals and also knew that the metals could be had from the mountains. It does not become clear whether they used to dig out and bring the metals from the mountains for their use, but it can be safely concluded that the existence of the metals under the surface of the hilly regions was fairly known to the people. These references show some development in the matter of knowledge about metals and their sources in the age of the

(1) (ii) rarājāṅgadasannadhaḥ sadhātur iva parvataḥ /

VI.69.87cd.

(iii) tāmrāḥ pītāḥ sitāḥ śvetāḥ patitāḥ sūryaraśmayah /
 dr̥ṣyante rāvaṇasyāṅge parva² taseva dhātavaḥ //

VI.108.26.

Rāmāyana.

All these references contained in the similes of the Rāmāyana which throw light on the various aspects of the culture and civilization as depicted in the Rām. are important by themselves. The poet gives in them a faithful picture of the age in which he flourished; and the conditions and circumstances under which the people lived in that age seem to have been fairly reflected in these references. Some references in these similes have shown that certain practices were almost the same as we find them in vogue even to-day. Such a linking of the present with that remote past in which the epic was composed over and above giving valuable pieces of information, is no doubt inspiring. Moreover the epic has wielded a universal influence on Indians, and the representation and investigation of the conditions as reflected in it do possess a value from the historical point of view also, even if these conditions and aspects of the social and cultural life of the people in the age of the epic are examined from the angle of similes only. The very construction of simile makes its scope quite large so as to cover almost all available materials within its reach. So these similes can be taken as representing the picture of the age in almost all the aspects and as such the information yielded by their investigation and elucidation is really valuable.