

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

An exhaustive and comprehensive survey and investigation of the similes in the Rām. do give a lot of information. The wide field of observation of the author covers up almost all the walks of life, and just as the epic itself can be rightly considered as a representation of the whole age and society, similarly the similes in the epic can be taken as a representation of the age to which the epic belonged. It has retained and reproduced the immense wealth of literary heritage which was endowed to it by convention and tradition.

So from the ^Whole study of the similes in the Rām. it appears that this figure of speech is quite widely used by the poet. The total number of similes which are taken up for investigation is nearly 3500. Thus from the statistical point of view also the importance of the similes in the Rāmāyana is quite obvious. A reader can easily get the impression that the author seems to have a special fondness for similes. Almost at every eighth^h or tenth line there occurs a simile; and the minor similes occurring in compounds are simply countless because all such similes like 'naraśārdulāḥ', 'naravyāghraḥ', 'narapuṅgavaḥ', 'rājivākṣaḥ', 'munisārdūlāḥ' etc. cannot be taken up so easily as a collection - they are as a sort of habit with the author. Moreover such similes cannot be considered as endowed with a special charm

of a striking form of an ornate expression. Apart from such similes, the other kinds of similes which occur in the Rām. are really important. Looking to their characteristics, the first trait which attracts our attention is their simplicity and ease. It appears that barring some stray exceptions the author does not try deliberately to make ~~xxx~~ his work studded with figures. Wherever they occur, they are quite necessary and are fitting to the context. The observation of the poet which covers up the nature-world, the human-life, the mythology and the animal-life gives him a sort of a great source to fall back upon and it appears that he has fully utilised his resources. Being embellished by such beauty-spots the work becomes a huge and grand edifice which is attractive due to its exemplary simplicity. Regarding the imagery of the Rām., it can be said that it is conventional in many cases. But the originality of the genius of Vālmiki is also a remarkable thing which should be never under-estimated. Though he gives his similes many a time, following the age-long conventions regarding the standards of comparison, yet on several occasions he has giveⁿ definitely original descriptions. The description of the mountains appearing as celibates or that of the sky appearing like a lovesick person occurring in the Kiśkindhākāṇḍa in the description of the rainy season (cf. IV.28.10, and IV.28.6 respectively) are the examples of the originality of imagery

in the Rām. He has given some descriptions which may appear as somewhat artificial. The description of Sītā given in V.19 or the description of the harem of Rāvaṇa given in V.9. ^{are such examples} ^

In these descriptions he uses many similes at a single instance. All these similes though highly ornate do not seem so fitting to the context. The comparison of Sītā with a river which is dried up or with fame which is damaged by ~~xx~~ some accusation are not quite happy comparisons. The poet seems to give several objects in adverse condition as upa-mānas to describe the pitiable condition of Sītā and so in that he seems to have given less importance to the sense of propriety which he preserves quite up to the mark on almost all occasions. Usually the similes in the Rām. are endowed with gracefulness of expression resulting from their natural simplicity. That characteristic distinguishes these similes from those occurring in the works of the authors belonging to the period of the classical Sanskrit Literature. Due to their simplicity they appeal directly to the mind of a 'sahṛdaya' whose sensibility is ripe enough to appreciate them. The very expression given to certain common ideas and things arouses a sense of familiarity with the descriptions given by the author; and as such they are endowed with a tremendous capacity of appealing pleasing to a reader.

On considering their structure and contents, it must be admitted that the similes of the Pūrṇopamā type is more

^a
 predominant in the Rām. These similes have all the ingredients in them and as such they give a perfect idea of the thing described. The other kinds of Luptopamā like upameyaluptā, vācakaluptā and ^asomāsagā upamās do occur in the Rām. But compared to the Pūrṇā Śrautī Upamās their number is smaller. The divisions of upamā given by the later poets must not have been known to the author of the Rām. as he preceded the whole Classical Sanskrit Literature. Moreover the author seems to be concerned more with the easy flow of the narrative of the epic and so he might have been less interested in incorporating all the types of the figures of speech. In the construction of his similes he is so simple that the similes having the termination 'vat' as a substitute for the usual 'iva' or 'yathā' do not occur frequently. Even in the compounds the particles showing the comparison, like sadṛśa, samibha or sankāśa do occur. This shows that the later types of the similes are really not given any considerable place in the Rām. which they do have in the works of the later authors. Yet this simplicity need not be taken as a sort of drawback on the part of the author. On the contrary it is the author's accomplishment that he is able to give very nice and sparkling literary gems in the form of his similes. The simplicity with which he uses his figures of speech is really a covetable thing. Though the similes are more or less conventional, yet the stamp of his individual genius is quite visible. The author's own mind is ~~defi-~~

definitely reflected. The epic being a long poem has given wider scope to utilise his observation and knowledge fully well. So his similes have been perfect pieces of literary beauty. In these similes having pure literary beauty he has referred to the different phenomena of nature and has tried to bring out their fullest beauty. Thus he has given a number of similes in which the moon, sun, clouds, wind, river, sky, sea and mountains are referred to as upamānas. These similes not only describe the object which the author desires to depict but they give a beautiful picture of the thing with which the object is compared. This achievement on the part of an author is quite highly commendable. All such cases of the similes having literary beauty have been discussed in the Chapter III. But one remarkable thing about these similes is that they present word-pictures by themselves. Even though the author does not seem to make them embellished with a sort of deliberate artificiality, yet many of these similes have a considerable effect of sense as well as sound. These achievements on the part of the author are all the more important, because he has not tried wilfully for them and hence they seem to be a natural feature with him.

Then, in his similes he gives a detailed picture of the society and the age to which he belonged. His similes

are thus important as a source of information. He has referred to so many things, principles, modes of behaviour, procedure of action, methods of building and construction and several other things. The epic has given full scope to him for referring ^{to} all these various things. These references when put together and taken up for a study and critical investigation have yielded good results. The belief regarding the destruction of the universe is such an example of a valuable information. The similes in the Rām. show that the people in that age definitely believed that the universe would be destroyed by fire which would reduce it to ashes. Some of the beliefs and customs which can be presumed on the strength of the references to them in the similes are important because such customs are prevalent even in the present age. So by gathering information regarding such customs and beliefs we can have an idea as to how old and deeply rooted our own customs and beliefs are. Moreover these similes are important as evidences because they create a grand picture of the past and as such their value as sources of information is all the more heightened.

The Rām. is a popular national epic of India.

Throughout the ages it has enjoyed a tremendous hold over the masses. Its main story is widely known throughout ^{the} length and breadth of the country and even ~~enjoys~~ beyond its frontiers. So it is quite likely that there might be

different versions and recensions of this epic. The original probable form of the epic is a matter and problem for enthusiastic and elaborate research. The similes in the Rām. also can have a bearing on this problem of the determination and reconstruction of the supposed original text of the epic. If a simile in the Rām. refers to some more modern or later thing as a standard of comparison, the stanza in which it occurs can be very easily decided to be a later interpolation. A simile¹ occurring in the Ayodhyākāṇḍa may probably be taken as such an example. In this simile the people of Ayodhyā compare the condition of Sītā dressed in the clothes made of bark with that of a S'ramanī. Now, S'ramana and S'ramanī are the terms given to the Buddhist monks and nuns. So, the word 'S'ramanī' can be ordinarily taken to mean a Buddhist nun. The Rām. is surely a pre-buddhistic work and as such, such a reference which contains any special characteristic term or principle of Buddhism, must be taken as a later addition. Thus if this interpretation of the word 'S'ramanī' is the probable connotation of the word, the stanza can be taken as an interpolation. In this way the similes in the Rām. can also help to some extent for the

1. iyaṁ hi kasyāpakarotikiñcit

tapasvinī yājavaraśya kanyā /
yā cīraṁ āśādyā janāśya madhye,
Sthitā viśamjñā S'ramanīva kācit //

decision regarding the genuineness or otherwise of a particular portion of the epic.

The study of the similes in the Rām. has yielded some other important results also. The mythological references contained in the similes have shown that the mythology reflected in them is nearer to the Vedic mythology. The second important conclusion, which can be drawn from the study of the mythological references is that the later purāṇic mythology is seen in its germs in the epic and not in its developed form. Thus the author of the epic is indebted to the Vedic literature which preceded him and to which he can be supposed to have an easy access. Similarly his influence on the authors belonging to the period of the classical Sanskrit literature can be determined to some extent as far as the similes are concerned. Thus the influence of the Vedic literature on the one hand and the influence of the author of the Rām. on the later authors on the other may very well help to decide regarding the original contribution of the author to the literature.

Such conclusions regarding the originality of the author and his influence on the later authors can give very important results for the chronological and historical study of the Sanskrit literature; and this study has given such important results which have been shown in the chapter entitled

"The Influence of Vālmiki on the authors of the Classical Sanskrit Literature". The author of the Rām. is considered as a fountain-head of inspiration for the later authors and the most bright luminary of the classical Sanskrit Literature namely Kālidāsa has also been influenced to a considerable extent by Vālmiki. Similarly his influence on the other important authors who preceded and followed Kālidāsa is also clearly visible. Thus all these important authors like Bhāsa, As'vaghōṣa, Kālidāsa and Bhavabhūti are influenced by the Rām. In the stanza¹ occurring in the prelude of the Mahavīracarita, Bhavabhūti pays a high tribute to the author of the Rām. saying that he is the first among the poets. The expression 'Prathamah Kavīnām' is really a fitting tribute to Vālmiki. He is more popularly known as the 'Ādikavi'.

The Mahātmya² of the Rām. which occurs in the Skandapurana also alludes to the greatness of the epic. These eulogies occurring in the Mahātmya tell us that the

1. prācetaso munivṛṣā prathamah kavīnām,

yat pāvanam raghupateḥ prajānāya vṛttam /

Mahavīracaritam Act. I.

2.(i) rāmāyaṇa mahākāvyaṃ sarvavedārtasammatam /

Rāmāyaṇa Mahātmya I.22ab.

(ii) rāmāyaṇam cādikāvyaṃ

Rāmāyaṇa Mahātmya I.38a.

Rām. is fully in accordance with the Vedas and has ^mimbibed their spirit fully. It is also definitely stated that the Rām. is the Ādikāvya. So it is quite natural that this epic enjoys its unique position in the Indian literature. So just as the Rām. is the first in the long line of the literary and poetic works of the Indian literature, it is also first to influence the other literary creators whose works followed it. This contention is equally true in case of the similes in the Rāmāyana. They have definitely influenced the authors of the classical Sanskrit literature. The imagery of the Rām. though based on convention has influenced ~~on~~ these authors of the later period to a considerable extent.

One point still deserves to be discussed while putting forth the important results of the study. The 'Critical Text' of the Rāmāyana being prepared by the Ramayana Department of the Oriental Institute at Baroda is yet in the process of completion. So it is quite natural that the references and the discussion regarding them must be done on the strength of some other edition. It may be that when the ~~Critical Edition~~ Critical Edition is completed many of the similes taken up here for discussion, investigation and appreciation may be dropped from it. The constituted and reconstructed text of the Critical Edition may not include all the stanzas of the Rām. in which these similes occur.

Yet it can safely be concluded that the general conclusions drawn from the study of these similes and the important results based on those conclusions need not be affected much by such an elimination of the stanzas of the epic. The conclusions are not drawn on the strength of an individual stanza containing a simile, but while investigating the simile, the type, content, implication etc must be considered as a matter of principle. The main conclusions arrived at in the course of the study are based on the consideration of representative cases and hence the elimination of one stanza or stanzas at one place or the other need not be taken with apprehension.

The simile being a very important figure is quite likely to give very good results if taken up for a scientific and methodical study. A study on the basis of analysis of individual cases and generalisations arrived at as a result of such study is quite highly valuable.

Prof. J. Gonda, remarks while giving his view on the study, or rather the method of studying the similes, "The classification of the various forms of their appearance, provided, it takes place on correct principles, the cataloguing of the similes which occur in certain parts of the Indian literature in accordance with the object of comparison

1. Remarks on Similes in Sanskrit Literature. p.8. by

Prof. J. Gonda, Leiden, Holland. 1949.

and with their frequency, the determination of the part played by the simile in the magical or religious texts is of interest from the standpoints of the history of literature, culture and religious. We learn from this much that helps us to a better understanding of the texts and of the Indian mind. But each of these views considers only one side of the phenomenon. Moreover it seems to me to be an awkward procedure to confine our investigations to a very small part of the literature; we are not able to rate the figure at its true value, if we confine ourselves to too small a domain. We must take it, making our choice from various kinds of literature, proceed in a comparing manner. We must not confine our materials to Kāvya and Rgveda, which contain omnium consensu, a great deal of unusual speech and which are in many respects court art. Moreover we have to ask ourselves whether the use of a simile is, apart from the cases mentioned by Oldenberg and Weller, always an 'Ornament' as is suggested by those who teach that Alankāras are ornaments, that alankarana includes, "everything that makes poetry attractive, that adds charm to it and embellishes it." Last but not least: We must not omit to take the simile for what it is in the first place viz. a linguistic phenomenon.". Prof. J. Gonda is perfectly right in his remarks on the study of the similes. He accepts that the study done on the basis of the analysis of the similes on the strength of their reference yields good and important

results. The study of the similes in the Rām. has surely led to important and useful conclusions. In fact he has himself suggested in his remarks that such a study is useful for the history of culture and literature. If that is the implication of his remarks, the study done here and the important results derived by such a study and investigation may probably be taken as fruitful to some extent. Regarding his remark about the study of similes as a linguistic phenomenon it can be said that it is worthwhile to undertake such a study of an important work like the Rām. If some results on the basis of such a study of the similes as a linguistic phenomenon are arrived at, that would be an humble effort to carry out the most valuable suggestion of a distinguished scholar like Prof. Gonda. In fact such results as arising out of the reading of the mind and motive of the author behind the creation of such similes or groups of similes have been yielded by the study. The examples of the accumulation of the similes done by Valmiki are shown in the chapter entitled, "Vālmiki as an Author, his knowledge, field of Observation and Style." Similarly the authors usage of the 'Prismatic Diction' is also brought out in the same chapter on the lines laid down by the very same scholar. Moreover the process of the development of the similes in the literature is also traced to very early period of the

human history in the first chapter - "Similes^{and} their Development ~~and place~~ in the Sanskrit Literature. ". So these are some of the important results derived from the study of the similes in the Rām.

Last but not the least, the importance and value of such investigation and study are quite considerable if the results are found useful in some way or the other. This much can be said without least hesitation that the study of the similes in the Rām. has revealed Vālmiki^u, one of the master minds of the world. It has also given glimpses of the the glorious past which is depicted in this Mahākāvya and if that is achieved so much is with us which can satisfy us, and our hearts may rest content for having the fruit which is quite worthy of the effort undertaken to achieve it . Finally, all conclusions and results yielded by such a study are ^udone to the greatness of the ^ugenius of the Ādi Kavi Vālmiki who left this Mahākāvya as an edifice of his glory and a shrine of his genius raised in honour of one of the greatest heroes of the world viz. Rāma whose life and adventures he has sung in his epic at the incentive and direction of Brahmā who is believed to ^{be} the creator of the universe according to the purāṇic mythology. Thus, if an humble access to the shrine of Vālmiki's genius is available to any one by such efforts to approach it with

reverence, surely the achievement is worth cherishing and the most endeared one, and if at all one is fortunate enough to accomplish that, it would certainly make one an ardent devotee of this Ādikavi who is the master creator of a Mahākāvya.