

PREFACE

The figures of speech enjoy a unique place in language as well as literature¹. Man is not satisfied by giving a plain account of what is seen, heard or experienced by him. So, from time immemorial he has been fond of expressing his ideas in a figurative and embellished language. It can be presumed that the probable reason for the origin and development of such an ornate form of language lies in this fondness for such language on the part of man.

Along with the knowledge of the history of literature a study of the development of the concept of the figures of speech or Alankāras is also quite interesting². These figures of speech make a literary work equipped with charming beauty which at once arrests the attention of a reader. It is also seen that a writer prefers to use them for making his work attractive and impressive. Among these figures of speech, some are quite basic and fundamental. A simile is such a figure of speech. If we look to the development of the Alankāras in the Indian literature, it will be quite easily understood that so many other alankāras which are based on the similarity between the two things intended to be described, have evolved

1. Vide p.1.

2. cf. Note No.2 on p.4.

out of a simile.

Now, this figure of speech has a special significance and importance in a literary work. Due to its elasticity and a wide range of reference as far as ~~the~~ standards of comparison are concerned, it gives a lot of information, besides being a literary piece of beauty and art. It gives a sort of a picture of the things which it describes and as a sum-total of all such similes, we can visualise a sort of a picture of the society and age to which a particular work belongs. If the work is really important, the information given by the similes is really valuable.

In the literature of the world, some works have proved themselves to be of supreme importance and they enjoy a unique position due to their intrinsic merits and literary beauty. Their study, done from any angle gives wonderful results. The world can really be proud of the works of the master creators who have presented the fruits of their genius to the people at large. Thus the works of Vālmiki, Vyāsa, Homer, Dante, Virgil, Kālidāsa, Shakespeare and Tagore can be considered as our international possessions.

It is this importance and unique place enjoyed by these works, that has led the seekers of knowledge to undertake their study.

Vālmiki's Rāmāyaṇa is considered as a Mahākāvya par

excellence, as far as the Indian literature is concerned. Being a literary work, it is fully endowed with beauty and charm. Like other poets, Vālmiki has used many figures of speech. But his use of the similes is really quite striking and noteworthy. His work is an epic and as such he had an ample scope to use this Alankāra.

A study of the similes employed by Vālmiki may yield some good and important results. Such a study on the other 'Great Epic of India' - viz. Mahābhārata, has been already done by scholars like Prof. E.W.Hopkins and others. Prof. S.N.Gajendragadkar of the Wilson College, Bombay has done a valuable work on the 'Similes in the Mahābhārata'. A similar study done with regard to the other epic namely the Rāmāyaṇa may also be a welcome attempt, as it had not been under taken upto^l now.

Some work on the imagery of the Rāmāyaṇa had been done by Prof. K.A.Subrahmanya Iyer of the Lucknow university. Yet a study of the similes in the Rāmāyaṇa, considering all their implications and other aspects like literary beauty, range of reference, their being a source of information and such other points might be worth ^{under} taking. I chose to undertake such an investigation of the similes in the Rāmāyaṇa to be quite interesting. So I have collected all such similes which have literary merits and beauty and tried to give a literary and critical appreciation of them. The information yielded by

these similes proved to be important from the cultural and social points of view, and so a chapter has been devoted for discussing the cultural and social conditions prevalent in the age of the Rāmāyana and reflected in the similes. The Rāmāyana, being an epic, has influenced the authors belonging to the classical period of the Sanskrit literature. So a study of such influence resulting in parallelism of ideas, imagery and expression has also been given in the present work. The similes in the Rāmāyana yield some information regarding the author also, and so a separate chapter about the author, his personality, his field of observation, his knowledge etc., has also been included in my work. There are yet some important problems regarding the epic - like its date, its genuine portions and interpolations etc. But as they seemed to be beyond the scope of my subject I have not touched them ; yet I have tried to show the bearing of the similes on such problems. I have simply tried to give a study of the similes proper, in the Rāmāyana and while proceeding with my problem, I have tried to concentrate my attention on the similes and their study from various aspects. During the whole course of my study, the similes in this epic have given me an indescribable joy and I present this work as a tribute to the great personality and matchless genius^u of the Adikavi. As the text of the Critical Edition of the Rāmāyana which is being published by the Oriental Institute, Baroda is not completed, I have chosen the edition of the Vālmiki-Rāmāyana, published by the Pandit

Pustakalaya of Banaras. So the references to the Rāmāyana are according to this edition of the bare-text of the Rāmāyana. Similarly the references to the Mahābhārata are according to the edition of the bare text of the Mahābhārata published by the Gitapress of Gorakhpur.

I feel, it is my first and foremost duty to express a deep and heart-felt sense of gratitude, reverence and indebtedness to my venerable Guru, Prof. G.H. Bhatt., M.A. I also thank Principal C.C. Shah, M.Sc., Sheth P.T. Arts and Science College, Godhra, for helping me in procuring some rare books useful for my work and for showing a deep and selfless interest in my work right from the time when I first came into his contact.

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Godhra.

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