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 in giving a faithful picture of his age, the fact 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 Ramayana, though traditionally known as Itihasa 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
of its story has naturally endowed 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.

Vālmīki'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 Rāmāyaṇa has given a number of similes which are valuabl
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 whi
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 endevour to make an all sided progress to
build a welfare state, a sort of a heaven of bliss for our
century-men.

If we look to the range of reference or in other words
the field of observation of Vālmīki, we can find that it is
quite extensive and embraces so many things. His 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 Rāmāyaṇa 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 invasions, armies and their maintenance etc. are quite likely to be there. While describing the adventures 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 Lanka for recovering the heroine of the epic; and so the references to the warfare are quite likely to occur in this epic. 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 those 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 political field. He would refer to the meteors to describe the fall of persons. That would give us information regarding the development of astrology in that age. He describes big cities like Ayodhyā, Mithilā, Kiskindhā and Laukā. He also describes the beautiful roads, gardens, parks and mansions of these cities. Such references give 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 hermits 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 of reference as far as the similes are concerned is thus quite wide and exhaustive 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
custom of the people of the south, Rama, Sitā and Lakṣāmapa reached Citrakāṭa. 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 Rāmāyaṇa. 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 Māhābhārata, (III.18) also where Manu, 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 supposed to be an incarnation of good Visnu 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 Rāmāyaṇa. There is a variety of beliefs regarding the

1. Kurvanti kusumāpidān śrāhsu surabhīnāmī //
   mygha prakāśā sāir phalakaṅār dāksīṇātyā yathā narāḥ //
   II.93.14.
the would be destruction of the universe, expressed in the Rāmāyaṇa. 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 similes containing references to fire in this connection are numerous. In some of these similes the relevant 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 disastrous and awe-inspiring personality of the person intended to be described because such a fire

1. (i) Sandāhe dhanuṣi śrīmān Rāmaḥ parapuranjayah /
    Yugāntagūr iba krūddha idam vacanam abrāvīt/III.64.76
(ii) Tapyāmānam tathā Rāmaṃ Sītāharanākarsitam /
    Lokānam abhāve yuktam Sāmpvartakam ivānalaṃam/III.65.1.
(iii) Rāmaḥ parabalām yugāntagūr ivothitā / IV.15.19 ab.
(iv) Tām īditām iva Kālāgnim nāgendramiiva kopitām/IV.31.31cd.
(v) Mahīṃ debatā kopena yugāntagūr ivothitā /V.36.13cd.
(vi) Sa tamento samāsādyā harim harīsāno yugāntakālāgnim
    iva prajāksayā / V.47.9cd.
(vii) Dāhāmy aham asambhrānto yugāntagūr iva prajāh /
    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 Laksāmana and those in V.47.8ab V.58.157ab describe Hanumā. The similes in VI.67.95ab and 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 Śūla. The simile in VI.104.23cd describes Rāvaṇa himself; that in VII.32-40ab describes Sahasrārjuna, while that in VII.69.32 ab refers to an arrow of Sātrughna to be discharged at the enemies.

(viii) Babhūva Rāmo durdharso yugāntāgniḥ iva jvalan VI.21.25cd
(ix) Babhakṣa rakṣo yudhi-kumbhakarṇaḥ,
Prajā yugāntāgniḥ iva pradīptah / VI.67.95.ab.
(x) Vavarśa śūlāni sutikṣṇadāmstrah,
Kālo yugāntāgniḥ iva pravrddhah / VI.67.101cd.
(xi) Gadaṁ ādāya samkṛuddho matto rākṣasapunāgavaḥ
Harin Samabhidudrāva yugāntāgniḥ iva jvalan // VI.70.54
(xii) Durāsadās' ca sanjajñe parighābharaṇaprabhah /
Kapināṃ sa nikumbhāgniḥ yugāntāgniḥ ivotthitaḥ //
VI.77.10.
(xiii) Babhūva samavabhadha-taro yugānta iva pāvakaḥ /
VI.101.38 cd.
(xiv) Sadhīmaṁ iva tīkṣṇāgraṁ yugāntāgniḥcayopamaṁ 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, 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 version of the Rāmāyāna it is quite likely that such a belief is prior to the belief in the great flood, as Rāmāyāna is supposed to be earlier than the Mbh. Whatever may be the ultimate conclusion regarding the genuineness of these passages, it may be argued with this might have been the popular belief in the age of the Rāmāyāna 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 show a slightly different aspect of the same belief. In the same 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 similes in IV.11.2, V.47.9 and VI.129.47cd refer to

(xv) Utpatantam yugāntāgniḥ jalaughair iva vāsavaḥ /VI.104.25cd.
(xvi) Prajājvāla mahāghoro yugānta iva pāvakah/ V.32.40 ab.
(xvii) Dadṛśuḥ sarvabhūtāni yugāntāgniḥ ivottthitām/VII.69.32ab

1. (i) Asamsayaṃ prajvalitaḥ tikṣṇair maṇḍāgaiḥ saraiḥ / tvam daheḥ kupito lokān yugānta iwa bhāskaraḥ //IV.11.2
(ii) Vicārayan svam ca balaṃ mahābalo /
Yuga kṣaya sūrya ivabhivardhate //V.47.9cd.
(iii) jighaṃsṛṣṭiḥ iva lokānte sarvān 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 Aśā 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 believed with some probability to be a mere extension of the belief that the destruction 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. 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 similes also which give some idea regarding the very matter. They can be taken to refer to some

1. (i) nanāḍa hanumāṇ vīro yugānte jalado yathā/V.54.20cd.
(ii) Pragrahya rākṣāṇi mahayudhānī
yugāntavātā īva saṃviceruh /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 similes in which he has taken the falling stars as upātana.

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

1.(i) Sā Kosalendra-duhitā veṣṭamānā mahītale//
na babhṛāja rajodhvastā tāreva gagānac cyutā //
 II.65.25c-24b.

(ii) Saṁhṛtadyutivistārām tārām iva divas' cyutām/ II.114.11cd.

(iii) tāṁ maholkām ivākāse dīpyamānām svatejasā /
 jahārākādām āvīśya sītām vaīrvanāmuṇah //III.52.32.

(iv) tasyās tānīyamivaraṇāni bhūṣāṇāni mahītale /
saghoṣaṃyavaśaśryanta ksīnas tārā iva m barāt //III.52,34

(v) tato nipatedām tārān cyutām tārām ivāmbhārāt / IV.21.ab.

(vi) Ksīnasūryām cyutām bhuma tārām nipatedām iva/V.17.20ab.

(vii) divāh kṣiptām ivolkām tāṁ saktim kṣiptām asāgatām/
 VI.70.39ab.

(viii) Sthīre tasyorasi vyūdhē parīghah s'atadhā kṛtah/
Visīryaṃaṇā bhaṣasā ulkāsatam ivāmbare // VI.77.13.

(ix) Sa chhinno naikadhā sūto divyāhātakamanditaḥ /
 vyaśryata maholkeva rāmaśārdito bhūvi // VI.79.42.

(x) Sā papāta tridhā chinnā saktih kāncanamālaṇīi /
 svisphullaiga jvalita maholkeva divas' cyuta // VI.101.21

(xi) tatāiva rāvaṇaṅpi pāṭhāmānā umher muhūh /
arjunorasi nirbhāti gadolkēva mahāgirau //
 VII.32.57c-58b.
Ayodhya. The simile in IV.21.1ab describes Tārā, the wife of Vālin with a pun 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 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 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 Rāmāyana.

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

1. (i) rajanyām aprakāsas tu santāpayati candraṁ / kṛṣna-raktāmśūparyanto lokasya iyoditaḥ// VI.23.8.
(ii) rajanyām aprakāsasādā santāpayati candraṁ / kṛṣna-raktāmśūparyanto yathā lokasya saṅkaṣaye// VI.41.17.
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-omens. 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 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-omenousness of the moon, which was in vogue in the age of the Rām. 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 all-omen in the age of the Rām.

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


2. Patantu ca khagā bhūmaū kṣāṇapunya īva grahāḥ / IV, 14. 21 cf.
to fight. On hearing his roaring the birds began to fall like stars or planets falling on the earth while describing this the poet assigns a reason for such a fall of the stars. This reason given by the poet 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 this 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 meritorious 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 science and astronomy their explanation given here appears to be plausible if the mental setting of the people is taken into consideration. Indians are generally believes in the law of karm in the life hereafter. That immutable ever abiding law of karm 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 Ram 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 expansion 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 Rama. 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 Ramayana 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.

1. Vipulaparighvan sa kumbhakarno
   ripu nidhanaya vinihsto mahatma /
   Kapigana-bhayam adadat subhimam,
   prabhur iva kiukardandaavan yugante // VI.65.57.
In a simile given in the yuddha\textsuperscript{kānda}, 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 Rāmāyaṇa instead of the idea of the destruction by the great floods, the destruction by the great universal fire has been clearly expressed.

In another simile\textsuperscript{2} 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

\begin{itemize}
  \item Lokasyāśya kṣaye ghore
  \hspace{1cm}pradīptevā vasundhara// VI. 75.30 ab.
  \item Vikṣamanam dhanū sajyam niḥvasantam punah punah/
  \hspace{1cm}dagdhukāmam jagat sarvam yugante tu yathā Haraṁ// II.65.2
\end{itemize}
in which the emaciated appearance of Rāma has been compared to that of God Hara or S'āṅkara 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 for this dreadful feat have been referred to. In this connection usually Agni has been alleged 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 trinity 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 simile in the uttara-kānda. The reference is to the fight between god Viṣṇu and the demon Mālin. The poet says that the arrows

1. 'Thathā rakṣo-dhanur muktā vajrānilamanojavāh /,
   harim vis'anti sma sārā loka iva viparyāye // VII.74.
shot from the bow of the demon entered the body of god Viṣṇu like
the worlds entering the body of good 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 Rāmā-
yaṇa as it has found expression here. It must be noted that
the simile given here furnishes a stage prior to the develop­
ment 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 Śaṅkara 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
Maṭraka; 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 Rāmāyaṇa 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 develop­
ment regarding the ultimate deification of Viṣṇu as the supreme
god, seen in the later Vaishnave Purāṇas. One more belief
about the destruction of the world is expressed by a simile in which god Brahmā has been assigned this dreadful duty of destroying the world. The description refers to Lanka which had been burnt by Hanuman. 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 puranic 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 Rāmāyaṇa 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 Rāmāyaṇa. 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

1. Dadars'ā Hanuman Mahāmanāḥ,
   Svayambhi kopa-pahatām ivāvanī / V.54.44 Od.
employed by the author in this connection is Kaśagna. 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 similes 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.

1. (i) Kalāgni sadrasāh Krodhe, I. 1.18. 0.
   (ii) Vidhūmam iva Kālāgnim, I.55.28a
   (iii) Vidhūm-iva Kālāgnir I.56.19a.
   (iv) Kālāgni iva sandīptah prāvardhat taptasananah /
        V.54.21cd.
   (v) Sa dipta iva Kālāgnir jagvalābhīmukhah Khajam/
        V.67.12 cd.
   (vi) Kālāgnir iva jajvāla krodhana paravirahā / VI.59.76cd.
   (vii) Cacāra hāsainyeṣu Kālāgnir iva mṛchitaḥ /VI.67.38cd.
   (viii) Sa rāksasānām tat saṁyam kālāgnir iva nirdahah /VI.86.19ab
   (ix.)Kālāgni iva saukṛddho yām yām disam avaikṣata/VI.93.25cd.
   (x) tato Krūdho dāsagrīvah kālāgnir iva nirgatag/
        VII.23.43 cd.
   (xi) Kālāgnimeva ghona tapteneva Mahārṣisā /
        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 dreadfulness 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 similes:

(i) Vinasakamam akitam amitram
   avasaam mrtuyu mivatman as ivam /II.12.107 cd.

(ii) Kah samartho dhikam kartum krtantas eva tisthatah/II.21.9c

(iii) Sa vinadya mahanadam sulam udyamy raksasah /

(iv) Abhyadhavat saukruddhah prayah kata ivantakah/III.2.9ab.

(v) Pravrddhaanyus tu kharah kharasvano,
    ripor vadhartham tvarito yathantakah/III.22.26 ab.

(vi) Abdhyadhavata kakuuttaham kruddho rudram ivantakah/
    III.25.31 cd.

(vii) dadrush sarvavuthani pasahastam ivantaah/ III.28.11 cd.

(viii) paryaptaham gaddapani t hantum pranan ye taval:
      trayanam api lokanam pasahasta ivantakah/ III.29.22

(ix) Rudreneva viniy dagdhaah s'vetaranye yathantakah/
     III.30.27.cd.
in which Ṛgama 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

(x) grhitadhanusam Rāmaṁ pāśahastam ivāntakah/III.39.19ab.
(xi) Vidravanti bhṛyād bhitṛ mṛtyor iva sādā prajāḥ/III.48.3cd.
(xii) va'kraṇāṇaśanaprakhyām dhanuḥ kāḥāntakopanam/IV.31.11 ab.
(xiii) tad eva vīraḥ parigrāhyasya teraṇam
Kṛtaksanah kāta iva prajāksye/V.46.40 cd.
(xiv) Tadeva vīro'bhijagāmatoraṇam kṛtaksanah
kāta iva prajāksye/V.47.38 cd.
(xv) Kruddhāḥ mṛtyum ivāsīnām prabodhay itumicchati/VI.13.17 cd
(xvi) Cacāra lokasamhāre pāśahastā ivāntakah/VI.53.25cd.
(xvii) tam antakam iva kruddhāḥ samare prānahārinīm/VI.56.24ab
(xviii) bhūtaḥ parivṛtatas tīkṣnair dehavadbhir ivāntakah.
VI.59.30 cd.
(xix) Kas tam mṛtyum. ivāsahyam āśādayitum arhati/VI.64.15cd.
(xx) tad gaccha sūlam ādāya pāśahasta ivāntakah/VI.65.13ab.
(xxi) vajrhastō yathā Śākrah pāśahasta ivāntakah /
VI.67.39 ab.
(xxii) pragṛhitāyudhasyeva mṛtyor iva mahāmṛde/VI.67.109ab.
(xxiii) raktasya naśyāḥ kruddho babhastā mṛtyur ivāntakah/
VI.86.16cd.
(xxiv) tam antakam iva kruddhāḥ caicāra cikhaśiṣum/
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
'Kruddah' is frequently used in the Epic, or at times other
synonymous words like 'pravrrddhamanuyah' 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 'pasaheitah' 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 'Krātaksanah' which shows the characteris-
tic of determination in this principle. It means that the
activity of death is a determined and planned course of action.

(xxv) Kṛta iva cāvāryo nyapatak rāvanaorasi /
VIII.17 cd.
(xxvi) gadaya gāndesānam īśānam iva cāntakah /
VIII.7.38 cd.
The words prajānāṁ 'Kṣayāḥ' used in these similes suggest the destruction on a large scale. The simile given in VI.59,30 cd describes that death is surrounded and attended upon by different spirits having bodies. Perhaps this may mean that yama might have been surrounded by yama dāpitas.

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

A belief in a bad omen is described in a simile 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 omens prevalent in the age of the Rāmāyaṇa. When we consider the present conditions prevailing in our country

1. nispaḍāta ca māteva grāhṛṣya pathi gacchataḥ,
   VI.65.50 ab.
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 simile\(^1\) which refers to the sun. Dr\(^2\) S.N.Vyas observes as follows: "A dark circle boardered 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 Râma and these omens were witnessed by him and his followers. The poet 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 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 Râm.

---

1. əyəməm rudhirparyantam babhija parviesaṇam /,
alatacakrapratim pratigrhya divākaram // III.23.3.

2. Belief in omens in the Rāmāṇa Age"
1952-53.
In the same context the poet has expressed one more sign of ill-omen by a simile\(^1\). 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 'Anākāśām' 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 simile\(^2\) occurring in the yuddhakāhda, 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

\(^1\) prabhinnagirasāṅkāsās toysonitadāhinah /
   Ākāśam tad anākāśam cakru bhīmā balāhakāh // III.23.7.
\(^2\) rakta candanaśaṅkāsā,
   sandhyā paramadārunah // 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 Laksmana 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 rent 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 Rāvaṇa 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 at Laṅkā. While narrating his experiences and referring to Sītā he uses the simile. He referred to Rāvaṇa's approach to Aśoka-vaṇikā 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 Rāvaṇa was thus repudiated by Sītā, he became extremely enraged and shone all

1. Jānakyā paruṣam vākyam evam ukto daśānanah /
   jajvāla sahasā kopāc citās tha iva pāvakah //
   v.38.74.
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 Ṛavaṇa 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 Ṛavaṇa 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 coming 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 Ṛavaṇa for the submission of Sītā, and his consequent entrusting Sītā to the care of demonesses who were ordered to bring her round for becoming willing to accept Ṛavaṇa's proposals, Trījātā one of the demonesses 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 Ṛavaṇa 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, "Her eye which is wide like a petal of 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 Rāma himself were present here." Here Trijātā 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.

1. Drṣyate ca sphurat cakṣuh padmapatram ivāyatam / āsacca hṛṣito vāṣyā daksināya hyadaksināh //
akaśmad eva Vaidehyā bāhur ekāḥ prakampate /
kareṇuḥastapratimāḥ savyas' corur anuttamāh //
vepamāñah sūcyati Rāghavam purataḥ sthitam /
V.27.50a-51f.
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 Dusyanta as he entered the penance grove. The reference in the Abhijnāna-Sākuntalam just shows how commonly such belief was prevalent among the people in ancient India. The enumeration of the good signs done here by Trijātā 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 similes which bear testimony to the belief of the people regarding good signs suggesting a future

1. Santam idam aśramapadam sphurati ca bahuh kutah phalam
   ihāṣya /
   Athavā bhavatavyānāṁ bhavanti dvārāni sarvatra //
   Abhijnāna-Sākuntalam, I.16.

2. (1) Tathāgatāṁ vyathitāṁ aninditāṁ,
   Vyapataharṣāṁ paridinamānasāṁ /
    Subhāṁ nimittāṁ bhejīre
   Nāram sriyā juṣṭāṁ ivopajīvinaḥ // V.29.1.
happy occurrence in case of a woman. In these similes also
the author has referred to the throbbing of the lips 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 suḥ ham vāham arālapakṣāma rājivṛtvaṃ kṛṣṇa
prāspandataikam nayam suksesyā
mināhatam padmam ivābhijātamram // V.29.2.

(iii) Gajendrahastapratimascā pīnas
teyor dvayoḥ samhatayoḥ sujayataḥ /
praspadamānre punar īrurasya
Rāmaṃ purastōt sthitam ācacakṣe // V.29.4

(iv) Subham punar hema samāhavarmam
īsad rajodvastam ivāmañāksyaḥ /
vāsah sthitāyāḥ sikharāgradatyāḥ
kiñcit parisramaḥ sata cārugātryāḥ //

V.29.5
almost 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 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 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 beliefs, as far as the similes are concerned, give an expression to the population's belief in a sort of comparison. Among these beliefs, some philosophical postulates and hypothetical axioms 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 simile in Ayodhyākanda there is a reference to the famous law of Karman. When Kaikeyī put forth her demands to the king Daśaratha, he was deeply grieved to find how Kaikeyī's attitude was disastrous. 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 krochram yatra vaشاهد kṣame tava /
   dukham evamvidham prāptam purākṛtam ivasubham //

II.12.79.
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 averse result of it accrued as fruit of that misdeed. But conversely it can be presumed that regarding the result of a good and meritorious action accruing as a fruit of such an action, 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 Gītā, 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 meritorious actions is expressed in a simile occurring

1. Prahasta rājā ca Mahodaras' ca
tvam kumbhakarnas' ca yadarthā jātam /,
Bṛvīthā Rāmam prati tan na sakṣyam,
yathā gāthāṃ svargaḥ adhāṣa buddhāḥ //
VI.14.10.
in the Yuddha-kāṇḍa Vibhīṣāna, in this stanza tells Brahasta 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 meritorious action can never attain to the heaven. It is a sheer impossibility. Thus in this simile Vibhīṣāna refers to the problem of the soul's attainment 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 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 simile in the Uttarākāṇḍa. Here

\[ \text{VII. 14. 22.} \]
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 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 of the different higher or lower regions according to the merits or otherwise of the person concerned. The belief expressed here seems to be exactly corresponding with that expressed in the Bhagwad Gītā 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 returns to the mortal world as soon as the stock is exhausted.

1. te tam bhuktvā svargalokam visālam /
   kṣine punyam martgalokam visanti //

B.G. IX.21.ab.
A simile given in the Kiskindha-Kanda 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 dhṛtadanḍās tu kṛtvā pāपānī mānavaḥ /

nirmalaṁ svargam āyānti santoḥ sukṛtino yathā //

IV.18.32.
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 simile 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. krta-prasādās tenai-vam rāghaveṇa mahātmanā /
   jagmuḥ svam svam grham sarve dehi deham iva tyajam //

VII.40.29
India wherein the religious principles expound the immortality of soul and also the doctrine of transmigration. 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 upanisads. 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 simile. 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 sārśresāna te paśyanti rāghavam /
   indriyārthaśu tisthamam bhūtātmānam iva prajāh //

VI.94.23
so its existence can be felt or inferred; it cannot be
conceived 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 simile 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 upamāya
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
expansion of the earth must have led the people to believe

1. kṛtsnam parivratam lokam caturbhujya saagaraṁ

V.49.12 cd.
that the earth was square in shape. Such a belief is found not only in the Rāmāyaṇa but also in many other works which have enriched the Sanskrit literature. In the Abhijnāna Śākuntalam for instance the stage Kanva blesses Śakuntalā 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 Duṣyanta 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 Rāmāyaṇa has used many similes referring to the various details of a sacrifice. In so many similes he has expressed the idea that in the sacrifices the fire was enkindled and ghee - ājya was offered to it as an

1. bhūtvā ciraṁya caturantamaḥśīpamāni
   Abhijnāna-Śākuntalam. IV.20a.

2. (i) Shhūta iva makheguir ājayasiktaḥ,
   Samabhavad ujjavalito maharsivaniḥ /I.20.2cd.
   (ii) rākṣasīnām vacaḥ S'rtvā Rāvano rākṣasēśvarah/
   hutāgaur iva jajvāla kopasāṃrteksanah //
   V.42.22.
   (iii) samutpapāta sadasī udīrito,
   dvijātimuhayaiḥ haviseva pāvakaḥ /
   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 increase of the anger. The third simile given in V.47.2cd describes the rising flow of vigour and enthusiasm felt by prince Ikṣa, the son of Rāvana on hearing the wretched

---

(Iv) Kumbhakarno brhatkarnah suhūtognir ivābabham/
VI.65.29ab.

(v) pasyatas tām tu rāmasya bhūyah krodho vyavardhata/
prabhū tājyāvasiktasya pāvakasyeṣa dīpyataḥ //
VI.118.11

(vi) Sa tu vaisrāṇas tatra tapovanagatas tadā/
avardhatāhutihuto mahātejā yathā malaḥ //
VII.3.9
destruction by Hanumat in the Asokavanika. 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 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 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 similes 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 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 wordпуду would have as believe. The simile in II.99.19 describes that the altar was wide and broad, and the Kusa 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 Kusa grass on all the sides. The

1. (i) Śalatālasva Karṇānām parṇair bahubhir āvṛtāṁ //
   Viśālām mṛduvistirṇāṁ kūśair vedim ivādhvare //
   II.99.19.

   (ii) Sutyākāle vinirvṛtte vedim gataravāṁ īvaḥ //
   II.114.8 cd.

   (iii) āstirna vasudhe kṛṣṇa mahāvediḥ kūśair īva //
   III.26.34.ab.

   (iv) Vedim īva paraṁrṣṭaṁ,
   V. 19.14a.
simile given in V.19.14a suggests that the altar was cleansed as the word paramrśtam signifies. The simile given in II.114.18cd describes Ayodhya as seen by Bharata on his return from Citrakūṭa. 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 ceremonies also which were supposed to have been performed during the session of a sacrifice.
In a simile occurring in the Ayodhya 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. Suyājña, a son of Vasiṣṭha happened to visit Rāma. He with his hands folded out of revenge 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 Suyājña 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 simile gives a valuable information about an important ceremony in a sacrifice.

1. tam āgatām vedavidām prāṇijalih sītāyā Saha /
suyājñaṃ abhiṣakrāma rāghavogñih ivārcitam // II.32.4.
Similarly in a simile\textsuperscript{1} in the Yuddha K\^\text{\textacute{a}}nda the ceremony of enkindling the fire in the sacrificial altar is described. After getting the news about S\=ita from Hanumat R\=ama arranged for a huge expedition in order to wage a war against R\=avana, while marching towards L\=anka, 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 Ku\=sa grass must have been in abundance on the shore of the sea and the lustrous form of R\=ama sitting on that grass must have given rise to the comparison with the fire expressed in this simile. The poet says that R\=ama appeared like the fire put on the altar in which the Ku\=sa 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 simile\textsuperscript{2} occurring in the Aranyak\^\text{\textacute{a}}nda describes R\=avana as seen by S\=urpan\=ak\=ha. Here also the fire put

\begin{verbatim}
1. Evam ukt\=a\=h Ku\=sa\=strime \textit{\text\textacute{a}}\=re m\=a\=n\=an\=ad\=ipateh / \\
\textit{Samvive\=a\=da t\=a\=d\=a R\=ama Vedy\=am iva hut\=\=a\=senah} // \\
VI.19.12.
2. \=a\=s\=ima\=m S\=u\textit{\text\textacute{a}}\=rya\=as\=ak\=a\=se Ka\=nc\=ane param\=\=as\=ane / \\
r\=uk\=ma\=vedi\=gata\=m pr\=\=a\=jya\=m j\=va\=l\=a\=nt\=a\=m i\=va p\=\=a\=vak\=a\=m // \\
III.32.5.
\end{verbatim}
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 of 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 Arāṇis 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 similes the poet has referred to the different

1.(i) Vṛtāh Suhrdbhis' ca virejur adhvare,
yathā sadyaṁ saṁiś trayoṁyaḥ yah //
II.103.32cd.
fires which were enkindled during the session of a sacrifice, he specially refers to 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 Karmakanda 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, Āhavaniya and Dakṣina. It appears that the author of the Rāmāyaṇa 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 Laksmana with Bharata at Citrakūṭa where the latter came to persuade Rāma to accept the throne of Ayodhya which happened to belong to him as Daśaratha the late king had to accept the proposals of his queen Kaikēyī 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

\[
\text{(ii) trīnas triśrākṣasāḥ putān rākṣasāḥ} / \\
\text{traye ākā ivāyagrāḥ sthiataś traya ivāyagrāḥ} // \\
\text{VII.5.7.}
\]

\[
\text{\text{(iii) vihṛtya} kālaṁ paripūrṇāḥ} / \\
\text{Sriya vrta dharmapurā susamsthitāḥ} /
\]

\[
\text{(ii) trīnas triśrākṣasāḥ putān rākṣasāḥ} / \\
\text{traye ākā ivāyagrāḥ sthiataś traya ivāyagrāḥ} // \\
\text{VII.5.7.}
\]

\[
\text{\text{(iii) vihṛtya} kālaṁ paripūrṇāḥ} / \\
\text{Sriya vrta dharmapurā susamsthitāḥ} /
\]
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 Rāmāyaṇa. So it is also quite likely that the author must have taken the personal charm and 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 uttara kānda Vasistha the family priest of Rāma relates the story of a demon named Sukesa. 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 Sukesa were like three eyes of god Śaṅkara, 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

\[
\begin{align*}
X. (iv) & \text{trayaḥ samiddhā iva diptā tejaso} \\
& \text{mahādhvare śādhu trayaḥ trayaḥ gnayah} //
\end{align*}
\]

VII.102.17.
Ram, Laksmana 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 Rama, Laksmana 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 Čitrakūṭa, are likened to the 'Sadasyas' 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 fledge 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 and resplendent with lustre and have been offered plenty of oblations in a great sacrifice. All this is really a decisive 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 terms by a simile occurring in the uttara-kāṇḍa. The poet wants to describe how the three sons of the demon named Śuṅgā, viz. Śāyavat, Śumālin and Śālīn 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. Śāyavat ca Śumālin ca Śālīn Śumahbalaḥ /
    āsan puraḥ aarās teṣāṁ kratunām iva pāvakaḥ //
VII.6.56.
concerned. This is also corroborated when we look to the
descriptions of the sacrifices given in the literature right
from the Veda to the later classical Sanskrit literature.
Everywhere we find that whenever a sacrifice was to be per-
formed, the fire was generated 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 simile\(^1\) occurring in the Uttara kāṇḍa. Vasī-
tha the family priest of Rāma was narrating to him the story
of the birth of Rāvaka and his brothers. The simile refers
to the father of Rāvana, Kaikase, a beautiful demoness, daugh-
ter of a demon named Sumālin, was quite mature and her
marriage was to be settled to Visravas, the son of Pulastya
a famous sage. The simile here shows, how pious and religious
was Visravas, while Kaikase was on her way Visravas engaged
himself in the performance of his daily religious rites. The

\(^1\) etasminnartare Rāma Pulastyaśānayo dvijah

Agnihotram upāṭiṣṭhah caturtha iva pāvakaḥ

The 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 Viśravas 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 Viśravas engaged himself in the performance of Agnihotra sacrifice like the fourth fire in a sacrifice. This shows that usually the three fires - viz. Gārhapatyā, Āhavanīya and Dakṣāyaṇa were employed in a sacrifice, but in certain other sacrifices the fourth sacrificial fire viz. the Anvāḥāryapacana was also employed as it can be the probable conclusion which can be derived from this reference. In fact an-vāḥārya-pacana fire was employed in the Anvāḥārya sacrifice as it is described in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa also.

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 simile 1 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 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 Śravaṇa on being severely wounded by him, that given in

1.(i) na tvāṁ aṁśahet krudhō vanam vanhir ivaidhitāḥ /  
II.63.44ab.
(ii) antardāhen dahanah santāpayati Rāghavam /  
Vanadābhisantaptam gūdhō'guir iva pādapan //  
II.85.17
(iii) idam vidhavam adyaśyāmi suskam vañam ivānalah /  
V.41.1lab.
(iv) savvastamēn lāṅgule vyavardhata mahēkapih /  
suskam indham āśādyā venēviva hutāsanah //  
V.53.7.
(v) adya tad vānarānīkaṁ Rāmam ca sahalakṣīmanam /  
niradhīṣyāmi bāranghaīr vanam dīptair ivāguṇibhiḥ//  
VI.59.6.
(vi) Sopi saṁyāhi saṅkrudhō vānarānīm mahējāsām /  
mamantha paramāyatto vañam aguir ivotihitāh //  
VI.66.12.
(vii) abhidudrāva senāṁ tāṁ vaṇāyaguir iva jvalan /  
VII.28.3cd.
II.85.17 very suggestively describes the concealed agony 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, Laksmana 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 confla-
guration would appear as just simply the products of the imagination of the author and would be quite devoid 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 that such forests or the ranges of them caught fire many times which phenomenon has led, the poet describe the dreadful destructive by using it as an upamāna. The existence of animal sacrifices is suggested by a simile occurring in the Aranya Kāṇḍa. In this speech Sītā describes how Rāvaṇa's life would be in peril like that of an animal which is tied at the yūpā, 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 yūpā. This shows such a sacrifice in which animals were sacrificed was in vogue in the age of the Rāma. otherwise the author would not have put this simile in the month of Sītā to describe how Rāvaṇa ran the risk of losing his life.

In this connection another simile occurring in the

1. sa te jīvitaśeṣasya Rāghavontakaro bali / pas'or yūpagatsyeva jīvitaṁ tavaḥurlabham //

   III.56.9.

2. niścēśānaṁ vadho rājaṁ kutsito jagatīpateḥ /
   kratumadhyopanītanāṁ paśūṇāṁ iva Rāghava //

   III.70.6.
Aranyakānda itself is noteworthy. The stanza in which this simile occurs is a speech of Lakṣmāṇa to Rāma on seeing the Kabandha, the headless demon in the forest. Lakṣmāṇa 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 speech 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 / Rāmayopaharisyāmi pasūtum pāśupateriva // 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 is shown in a simile 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. Śīrasā tvābhīyaśeṣeḥ kuruṣva karaṇāḥ mayi /
Bāndhavesu ca sarvesu bhutesviva maheśvaram //

II.106. 31c-32b.
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. (i) ānayisyāmi vai rāmaṁ havyavāham ivādhvarāt /
   II.79.11cd.

(ii) aham praśravanasthāya rāghavāyādyā maithiliṁ /
     prāpayisyāmi śakrāya havyam hutam ivānahā //
     V.37.23.

(iii) dadṛṣuṁ tāṁ mahābhāgāṁ praviśantīṁ hutāsanam /
     sitāṁ kṛtnāṁ trayo lokāṁ punyāṁ ājñā hutāṁ iva//
     pracukrusuḥ striyāṁ sarvās tāṁ drṣṭvā havyavāhanā /
     pratantum samskṛtam mantrair vasor dhāram ivādhvare //
     VII.119.31c-33b.

(iv) tad rāvānaḥalamb prāpya balaṁ taśya mahīpateh /
     praṇāṣyata tadā sarvāṁ havyāṁ hutam ivānalā //
     VII.19.14-15b

(v) nasyati sma balam tatra havyam hutam ivānalā /
    VII.19.17ab.
The first simile given in II.79.110 expresses the decision of Bharata, in which he says that he would bring Rama back to Ayodhya 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 Sita to Rama, 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 Sita. She appeared to all those who witnessed the scene as a sanctified oblation being offered in the fire. In this very context Sita likened to an oblation sanctified for being offered to the fire. The expression used at this place is, "patītām śaṁskṛtām mantrair vāsor dhārām ivadhvare." This shows the practice of offering a particular oblation in the fire during the course of a sacrificial performance. This oblation was called 'vāsor dhārā' - 'a stream of Vasu' and this was an oblation of ghee offered at the time of the 'Agnicyayana'. Such an oblation of ghee was prescribed in the Atharva-Veda and Taittirya Samhita as is suggested by Prof. M.M. Williams while explaining the word 'vāsor dhārā'.

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 Rāvana. The similes describe how the army of Rāvana 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 says 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. Sarvādbhigataḥ sadbhīḥ samudra iva sindhubhīḥ /
   āryaḥ sarvasamaścaiva sadaiva priyadarśānah //
   I.1.16.
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 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.

1. Sa ca sarvagunopetaḥ kausalyāṇandavardhanah /
   samudra iva gāmbhirye dhairyena Himvaniva // I.1.17
2. (i) Sa satyavādi dharmatmā gāmbhiryat sāgaropamaḥ /
   II.34.9ab
   (ii) samudram iva ghambhiram 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 circumstances. The poet has used this expression also, at many places.

2. (ii$) vegas te vāyunā tulyo gāmbhiryam udadher iva / VII.37.6cd.

1. (i) Sthitah svadharmā himvān ivācalah / II.112.30cd
   (ii) mahādharasamo dhṛtyām mattaḥ 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. Ayodhī, 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 arisocratic 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.

1. (iii) tvadvidhā buddhi sampunnā mahātmāno nararṣabhāḥ / śpatsu na prakampate vāyuvegair ivācalah //
   III.67.7c-8b

   (iv) yan mahendrem ivājayyam dusprakampyam ivācalam /
   II.35.7ab

2. Sarve narās' ca nāryas' ca dharmasīlāḥ susamyataḥ /
   uditāh sīlavṛttābhyām mahārsaya ivāmalāḥ // I.6.9.
Similarly while describing a sacred place, Akardama, the author uses a simile which displays the concept as regards the mental outlook and temperament of a noble person after receiving instructions from Nārada, Vālmīki 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 Vālmīki began describing the sanctity of that Tīrtha in these words, "Bhāradvāja, know this to be a Tīrtha named Akardama which is a beautiful and these pure water is in it 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 can be pronounced. The simile here suggests that the ideal and noble person should be serene, amicable and pious.

1. Akardamam idam tīrtham Bhāradvāja, niśāmaya / 
   ramaṇīyam prasannāmbu sammanuṣyatam yo yathā // I.2.5.
A simile occurring in the Uttarakanda emphasises the 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 Śrī Rāma. 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.

1. tair aśvair bhrāmyate bhrāntaiḥ sumāli rākṣasesvarah /
   indriyāśvaiḥ paribhrāntair dhṛtibhīno yathā narāḥ //
   VII.7.30.
In the same context 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 Śumāli 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 simile occurring in the Bālakāṇḍa shows how a person should try to preserve his fame in order to maintain his social status. The simile is a reply of Vasiṣṭha to Viśvāmitra who proposed to barter Vasiṣṭha's cow which yielded every desired object, with whatever riches and wealth he wished to have from him. Vasiṣṭha's reply to 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 self. This appropriate answer of Vasiṣṭha 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 rāṇe Viṣṇur jītendriya ivādhībhiḥ /
   VII.7.34ab.

2. Sāvati śabalā mānaṁ kīrtiṁ 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 simile occurring in the Aranyakanda 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 Sita by Rama when he started in search of her. Rama wants here to describe how Sita had left him. To describe this he uses this simile in which he describes how fame forsakes a crooked person. Rama 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. mām ihotārya karaṇam kīḥ̄r naram ivāṉṛjum /
    kva gačchasi varārohe ma motoṛja sumadhyme //
    III.61.10.
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 simile occurring in the Sundara-kāṇḍa is also worth noting. Hanumat, after a great deal of search and painful investigation found Śītā in the Asokavanikā. 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 Śītā 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 Śītā 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.

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

1. abhūtenapāpādēma kīrtīṁ nipatītāṁ īva / V.15.34cd.
2. (i) samāṁ īva mahākīrtīṁ / V.19.11a.
   (ii) visūddhā triṣṇu lokēṣu maithilī janakātmajā /
   na hi hātum īyam śakya kīrtīṁ ātmavatā yathā // V.19.11a.
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 change 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 says that Sītā was as dear to Rāma as his very life. She 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 Rohini's following Gandha. 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 Bālakanda also, the author gives vivid description of the devotion and love

1. rāmasya dayītā bhāryā nityām prāṇasamā hitā/
   janakasya kule jātā devamāyeva nirmītā //
   sarva laksanaṃ sampannaṃ nārīṇam uttamā vadhūḥ /
   sītāpyanugatā rāmaṃ sāsinam rohini yathā // I.1.26c-28b.

2. rāmas tu sītāyā sārdham vijahāra bahūnrtūn /
   manasvī tadgatamanās tasyā hṛdi samarpitāḥ //
   priyā tu sītā rāmasya dārāḥ pitṛkrītā iti /
   guṇad rūpaganāc cāpi prītir bhūyobhyavardhata /
   tasyaśa bharta dviguno hṛdaye parivartata//
   antargatam abhivyaktaṃ ākhyāti hṛdayam hṛdaḥ /
   tasya bhūyo vīśeṣena maithilī janakātmajā //
   devatābhīḥ sāma rūpe sītā śrīr iva rūpīṇi /
   tayā sa rājarṣisutobhirāmaya
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
dsameyivēn uttamarājakanyayā/
ativa rāmah suśubhātikāmayā
vibhūḥ śrīyā 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 Lakṣmī; 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 Lakṣmī 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. Prāṇas 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 Lakṣṇī their number is very poor. So it can be safely concluded that in the age of the Rām. Lakṣṇī 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 Lakṣṇī, effected by Rati.

A simile occurring in the Ayodhyā Kāṇḍa speaks for the devotion and exemplary love of Sītā towards Rāma. The simile occurs in a tragic situation. Rāma, Lakṣmana 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 vaidehi chaṣeṣvāmgataḥ patim /,
   na jaṅgī rata dharme meruṁ arka prabhā yathā //
   II.40.24
people of Ayodhya 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 simile occurring in the

1. iyam Sītā mama sutā sahadharimacari tava /
   pratiecha cainām bhadraṁ te pāṇim grhitīṣvā pāṇīnā //
   pativrata mahābhāgā chāyevāmugatā sadā /
   ityukvā prākṣipad rājā mantrapūtam jalaṁ tada //

I.73.27.28.
Bāla-Kanda is noteworthy. The people of Ayodhya who went to give a send off to Rāma, Lākṣāmaṇa 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 Janka 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 similes\(^1\) which also deserve to be noted because they depict how ardently 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 her to accept his entreaties. Here Sītā in order, to put an effective check on Rāvaṇa's lustful behaviour declares

\[1.\begin{align*}
(\text{i}) & \text{ ananyā Rāghaveṇāḥaṁ bhāskareṇa prabhā yathā } / \\
& \text{ V.21.16 ab.} \\
(\text{ii}) & \text{ Rāmeṇa saṅgata Sītā bhāskareṇa prabhā yathā } / \\
& \text{ V.27.12.ab.} \\
(\text{iii}) & \text{ ananyā hi mayā Sītā bhāskareṇa prabhā yathā } / \\
& \text{ VI.121.19cd.}
\end{align*}\]
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 Trijata 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-ordery 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 which is united with the sun. This is Rāma’s high tribute to Sītā’s love towards him.

Out of other references in this matter, those

1. (i) Samānasyatī sugrīvaḥ sītāya saha rāghavam / s'as'an'kam iva rohinyā hētvā tam rāvanam rane // IV.35.14.

   (ii) prātham aroha me devi ma vikāṅkṣam sobhane / yogam anviccha rāmeṇa sa'sāṅkeneva rohini // 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 Tāra to Lakṣaṇa who had been on a visit to remind Sugrīva of his promise given to Rāma to help to find out Sītā. The second simile given in V.37.20 is a speech of Hanumāt 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 Hanumāt to Sītā wherein he gives her the picture of her future union with Rāma. The fourth simile, in this connection occurs when Hanumāt takes Sītā's leave before proceeding to return.

All these similes show that the union between Rohini 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

\[(iii) tvaṁ samesyasi rāmeṇa śaśāṅkeneva rohiṇī / V.39.45cd.\]

\[(iv) tvaṁ samesyasi rāmeṇa śaśāṅkeneva rohiṇī / V.56.20cd.\]
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 Rohini as the upama in the majority of cases when he refers to the god-world.

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

1. (i) tam nityam amârktãsmi yathã suryã suvarcalã /
   V.24.9.cd
(ii) Agneh Svâhã yathã devi Sacivendraasya S'obhane /
(iii) Atha Däsaratâs' citrañ citrakûtam adarsëyat/
   bhâryâm amarasaâkâsãh saçim iva purandarañ //
   II.94.2.
(iv) mam hi dharmâtmanah patnîm saçim iva saçipateh /
   tvad anyas triçu lokeśu prârthayen manasãpi kañ //
   V.22.14.
(v) yathã saçî mahabhâgã sakram sampatisthati /
   V.24.10ab.
(vi) Saciva patyã sakreñ bhartrã ñathavatî hyasi /
   V.39.52cd.
god Agni and his wife, Svāhā, that between Sūrya and his wife Suvarcālā, and that between god Indra and his wife Śaci are important. The similes referring to these union are many and they solemnly proclaim the harmony of conjugal 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.128.33cd and VII.42.28c-29b refer to Śītā and Rāma while the simile occurring in VII.12.6c-7b refers to a damsel named Hema and the demon Maya, the father in law of Rāvaṇa. 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 couples 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 Śaci and Indra, which fact shows that among the Epic-pantheon

1. (vii) amurakta hi vaidehi raman sarvātmanā subhā /
ananya citta Rāme ca pañomiva purnādareś //
V.59.28.
(viii) Śītā samagra Rāmeṇa mahendraṇa yathā saci /
VI.128.33cd.
(ix) Hema nāmāpsara tata śrutapūrvā yadi tvaśa/
daivatair mama sā dattā paurāṇika śatrakato //
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 similes occurring in the Ayodhyākānda an indirect hint seems to have been contained regarding the age of marriage in case of women to the age of the Rām. Both these similes occur in the speech of Sītā to Ānūṣyā 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 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 wealth very much. Thus from this simile it seems that there

\[ \text{(i) patisamyogasulabham vayo drṣṭvā tu me pita} / \]
\[ \text{cintām abhyagamad dīno vittanaśād ivādhe}
\]
\[ \text{// II.118.34.} \]

(ii) sadṛśāc caṃaprakṛṣṭāc ca loke kanyāpita janāt /
\[ \text{paradharṣanam avāpno tisakreṇāpi samo bhuvī} //} \]
\[ \text{II.118.35.} \]
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 book, remarks,...
while narrating the story of her marriage to
Anasūyā, Sītā 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 Sītā 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 Sītā, 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 denouncement,

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 those which refer to the customs and manners 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 simile occurring in the Aranyakāṇḍa thus shows that the the laides always used to make a sāphron mark on their foreheads as that must have been taken 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 laides 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. Seemingly it must have

1. sevamane dṛṇāham sūrye diṣṭam antakasevitam / 
   vihindilakeva stri nottara dik prakāśate //

   III.16.8.
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 saphron 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 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 similes 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 Laks, Pampa; the third simile contained in IV.27.19cd describes a river named Prācinvāhini; the fourth simile in this connection, given in V.3.18cd refers to Lanka, and the last simile occurring in V.14.13cd describes a beautiful

1. (i) devarajopavāhyais ca sannāditam vanāntaram /
    pramadām iva yatānena bhūsītaṃ bhūsanottamaih //
    II.50.23.
(ii) anyais ca vividhair vrksaih pramadām iva bhūsītaṃ /
    III.75.17 cd.
(iii) vasanābharaṇopeta pramadeva bhāhyā laṅkṛtā /
    IV.27.19 od.
(iv) yantrāgrārastaniḥ rddḥāṃ pramadām iva bhūsītaṃ /
    V.3.18cd.
(v) rājasa vasudha tatra pramadeva viṅghūsīta /
    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 similes which refer to this ornamentation done by men. The former simile occurring in IV.1.21 of the two similes quoted here describes the karnikāra trees in the forests which surrounded the lake, Pampa while the latter one contained in VI.39.7cd refers to the hillocks in Lankā. The former simile refers to the men as being covered with godi which surely means the golden ornaments, and it also describes them as having a yellow to cover the lower part of the body. The simile shows that the men

1. (i) supuśpitāṁ tu pasyēmān karnikārāṁ samantataḥ / hātakapratisāṅchannāṁ naraṁ pīṭāmbarāṁ iva // IV.1.21.
(ii) dharayanty agamāṁ tatra bhūṣaṅnāṁvā maṁavāḥ / 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 these similes give a valuable piece of information regarding the mode of dressing of the men in the age of the Rāmāyaṇa.

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 similes which occur in the Aranyakāṇḍa are also noteworthy. The stanza is a speech of Sūrpanākhā to Rāvaṇa. She here wanted to describe the futility of the power and strength of Rāvaṇa. She said 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. upabhuktam yathā vāsah srajo vā mṛditā yathā /
   evaṁ pājyāt paribhāṣātāṁ skantarthaṁ nirarthakaṁ //

III.33.19.
well as the decency of clothes and a fascination 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 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 similes occurring in the Araṇyakāṇḍa show the existence of such a practice of

1. (i) Sā hemavarna nilāṅgam hraithili rākṣasādhipam / susūbhe kāncanī kānci nilam gajam iva śritā //
III.52.25

(ii) tāmpurvāla raktā nilāṅgam rākṣasesvaram / prāsobhayata vaidehi gajam kasyeva kāncanī //
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 Rāmāyaṇa is reflected. A simile contained in II.30.8 is one of such examples. 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 - 'sailūsa' 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 bhāryam kaumarim ciram adhyuṣitām satīm /
   sailūsa iva mām rāma parebyo dātum ichhasī // 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 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 speech of Rāma addressed to Lakṣaṇa occurring in the Ayodhyākāṇḍa there is a reference to the condition of a widow. Lakṣaṇa 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 Lakṣaṇa Rāma first tried to reveal the impossibility of Kausalyā's following him to the forests. He asked Lakṣaṇa 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. tasmān punar jīvati dharmarāje
   vīṣeṣṭah sve pathi valāmāne /
   devī mayā sārdham itopagacchet
   katham avid anyā vidhaveva nāri // 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 Sundarakāṇḍa, can be taken as direct references to widows and their pitiable condition. These similes occur in Sītā's speech.

1. (i) nūnāṁ laṅkā hate pāpe rāvaṇe rākṣasādhamo /
   śoṣam yasyati durdharṣa pramadā vidhavā yathā //
   (ii) punyotsava samutthā ca nāstabhātrī sarākṣasi /
   bhavisyati purī laṅkā nāstabhātrī yathāngana //

addressed to the demoness who were keeping a watch on her at the Asokavanikā. She tried to draw the pitiable condition of Lāṅkā when it would be conquered by Rāma. For this she refers to a widow as the upamāṇa. She told them that when the wretched demon Rāvaṇa would be killed, the beautiful city of Lāṅkā 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 Lāṅkā 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. The simile is found in the description of Ayodhya 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. Ayodhya 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 Rāma. There are many references to elephants. There are also such references to horses. In some similes

1. puruṣasyāprahṛṣtasya pratisyudhām lepānām /
   santaptām iva sōkena gātrayaṣṭimabhūṣanām //

II.114.19.
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 similes occurring in the Ayodhyākāṇḍa and the other occurring in the Aranyakāṇḍa show how serpents were subjected and tamed. The former of these two similes refers to the king Daśaratha’s condition after the announce-

1. (i) asāmrtyāyāṁ āsino jagatyāṁ dirgham ucchasan /
mandale paryamgo ruddho mantrair iva mahāviṣāṁ //
II.12.4c-5b.
(ii) sa viṣmāṁ sarair bhagna papata ḍharaṇitale /
gada mantrausadhabalair vyālīva vinipatitā //
III.29.28.
ment of Kaikeyi'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 subdued. 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 subdued. 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, probably some infatuating and inoxicating 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 Ramayana. 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 simile in the Aranyakanda describes vividly the preliminairy process for catching and subjugating a wild elephant. The simile is a speech of Rama to Lakshmana. Here he instructs Lakshmana to dig a great pit for buying the corpse of the demon Viradha whom they had already killed. Rama asks Lakshmana 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. Kunjarasyen śr audrasya rākṣasasya lakṣaṇa /
   vaneśmin sumahān śvabhraḥ khanyatām raudarakarmaṇaḥ //

III.4.25.
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 simile 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 appear 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. suṣrue caṇrataḥ śrīnām rudantīnām mahāsvanāh/
yathā nādāḥ kareṇūnām baddhe maṃati kunjare //
II.40.30.
soon as the elephant fell in the pit it got itself tied up 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 process for subjugating a wild elephant as it appears from the descriptions given in these similes.

It appears from the descriptions given in several similes that different weapons were used for 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 puruṣavyāghras dukhadaṁ darsanam pitē / mātus'ca saṁitum šaktas totrārdita iva dvipah //
   II.40.42.

(ii) grhe gr̥he rudatyaś'ca bhartāram grham āgatam /
vyagarhayanta dukhārata vāgbhis totrair iva dvipān//
   II.48.6.

(iii) iti nāga ivāranye tomarāṃkusācodyaḥ /
paptāta bhuvi saṃkruddho niḥśvasanniva pannagah //
   II.74.35.
was a god which is referred to as 'tomra' the other was toma - 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 deviate was also used for the elephants as it appeared in a simile in the Ayodhavakanda. This was known as ulkā, which did 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. Williams\(^2\) 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

\[\text{(i) narair ivolkābhiraḥpanahāno} \]

\[\text{mahāgājośahāvānam auupraviṣṭah //} \]

\[\text{II.21.54.} \]

\[\text{(ii) A Sanskrit English Dictionary p.218 column 3. by} \]

\[\text{Sri M.M. Williams.} \]
must have strarfed walking on some public road running a

Thus, these weapons and devices seem to have been
employed in the age of the Rāmāyana. 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 similes also. All
these similes occur in the yuddha kānda 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 been a vogue in that age, and that
appears probable also because elephants when furious

1. (i) kṣīraṁ vajropamaiḥ bānaira śatadhā kārmuka cyutaiḥ /
   rāmaṁ ādīpayisyami ulkābhiriva kuṇjaram //
   VI.13.19.

(ii) sarair ādīpayāmy enam ulkābhir iva kuṇjaram /
   VI.24.39.cd.

(iii) bhruvor vivyādha bānābhyaṁ ,
   ulkābhyaṁ iva kuṇjaram /
   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 warriors 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 similes\(^1\) show that such different weapons were used for horses. The former of these two similes refers to the king Dāsāratha when Kaikeyī made her proposals and the latter referred to Rāma when Kaikeyī announced the sentence of exile to him. Here the former simile shows that a sort of a gođī was used for a horse. The taunting sarcasm employed by Kaikeyī here, proved to be like that gođī for Dāsāratha. The very word 'tunna' shows that the

\(^1\) (i) sa tunna iva tīkeṇena pratodena hauottamah //, rājā pracodito bhīkeṣam kaikeyya vākyam abravit // II.14.23.

(ii) Rāmopyutthaya rājanaṃ Kaikeyyābhīpura coditaḥ // Kasāyevāhato vājī vanam gantuṃ kṛtavaraḥ // II.19.18.
gojā 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, kṣaṭā 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 gojā and a whip were the usual means employed for the horses in the age of the Rām.

There are some references in the Rām. which show that

1. (i) yathā hṛpalāḥ pāśavo yathā senā hṛnāyaka /
   yathā candraṁ vinā rātmir yathā gāvo minā vṛśam /
   evaṁ hi bhavitā rāstram yatra rājā na dṛṣyate //
   II.14.56c-57d.

(ii) agopala yathā gavastathā rāstramarājakam /
   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 Hanumāt and the fourth simile given in V.11.10 describes Rāvana as seen by Hanumāt 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) dādaraśa dharmān divi bhramāntam gosṭhe vṛṣam iva
   vṛṣah bhramāntam //

V.5.2.cd.

(iv) tāsām madhye mahābānuḥ śuṣubhe rākṣasesvarah /
   gosṭhe manatī mukhyānāṁ gavāṁ madhye yathā vṛṣah //

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 the moon or a herd of cows with 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 were 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 similes occurring in the Ayodhyakānda, refer to the bullocks yoked to a cart. The former simile contained in II.14.12cd describes the king Dāsaratha 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 parispandan yugacakrantaram yathā /
II.14.12cd.
(ii) soham katham imam bhāram mañśā dhuryasamudhratam/
damyo dhuram ivāṣādyā saheyam kena caṃjasā //
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 simile showing how actually a deer was untied and killed. The stanza in which the simile occurs is a speech of Dāsaratha 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 soothing 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 considered 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 weakness of the deer into consideration and took advantage of it. The killing of a deer might have

1. (i) aurtair bata māṁ sāntvaiḥ sāntvayāti sma bhāṣase /
    gītā s'abdena samrudhya āubho mṛgam ivāvadhiḥ //
    II.12.78.
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 more support to the practice of killing a deer in that way.

Similarly one simile occurring in the Aranyakānda shows how the fish were caught. The simile is a speech of Jäta'yus to Rāma. He consoles saying 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 simile occurring in the Sundara-Kānda, suggests the existence of the practice of

1. (i) tṝṭpriyām jānakām hṛṣṭa rāvaṇo rākṣases'vārāh
   jhāsavad bādisam grhyā kṣipram eva vinaśyati //
   III.68.13c-14b.
   (ii) nūm lālapaye sitā pāñjarasvēva sārikā /
   jānakasya sutā sitā rāmapatī sumadhyaśna //
   V.13.16.
taming a parrot in the age of the Rām. The simile expresses the anxiety of Hanumāt about Sītā when he could not find out, at the first instance from the palatial appartment of Lankā. He says here, "I am sure, the daughter of Janaka and the wife of Rāma, is being forfeited 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 in 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 reference contained in the Sundara-kāṇḍa 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'okavanīkā. She here expresses

1. du’kham batedam mama du’khitāyā
daśā cīrīyādhiṃgyāto dvaṁ /
   baddhasya vadhasya yathā nīśante
   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. 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 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., those 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 Rāmāyāna, 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 Lāṅkā in a ship did not crop up at all in their minds. It 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 Sāgara's help to Rāma under compulsion would not have been imagined 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 Rāmāyāna. He however admits

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 Rāmāyaṇa contains many references in which the boat in the sea is mentioned. The poet uses the words like Sāgara, Arṇava, 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 Rāmāyaṇa.

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

\[
\begin{align*}
(i) & \text{ tasyaiśa dharmarājasya dharmamulā mahātmanah} / \\
& \text{ paribhamati rājāśrīr naur ivākamika jale} // \\
& \text{ II.81.6.}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
(ii) & \text{ tām dharsanām adūrasthān drṣṭvā cātmāi pārthivah} / \\
& \text{ cūrnavatī pāram nāsasādaplavo yathā} // \\
& \text{ II.118.36}
\end{align*}
\]
that navigation was in voyage in the age of the Rām. The description given in these similes shows that these

1. (iii) aśrupūrṇamukham dīnāṁ sokabhārānbhūpitām / vāyuṣegair ivākrāntām mañjantīṁ nāvam ārṇave;//
    III.55.4.

   (iv) Sa majjatayavaseḥ śoke bhārākranteva naur jale /
       IV.7.10cd.

   (v) Sa tu vāli pracalitaḥ sālatādanavihvalah /
        gurubhārasamākrānta naḥḥ sasārtheva sāgare //
       IV.16.16cd.16.24cd.

   (vi) Sāgare mārūṭaviṣṭā naur ivāśittada kapiḥ /
       V.1.67cd.

   (vii) Samākṣiptośmi sahasā paṅgukṛtaparākrameḥ /
        pratilomena vātena mahānaur iva sāgare //
       V.1.184.

   (viii) Sa dadārs' a tataḥ sītām pūrṇacandra nibhānamām /
        s'okabhārārair iva nyastāṁ bhārair nāvam ivāṃbhasi//
       V.17.3.

   (ix) dadarsa sītām dukhārtām nāvam samām ivāṃnave/ 
       V.19.4.cd.

   (x) esālpaṃpurṇaṃ kṛṣṇaṃ vinasīṣyāmy anāthavat /
        samudramadhaye naḥḥ pūrṇaḥ vāyuṣegair ivāhatā //
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 blew, they got puffed with air and the force of the wind drove the boats on the water. From some references like that in II.81.6, it appears that the helm or rudder was devised to control 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 Dasaratha 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) esē vipadasyāham alpabhaya,  
     mahānave naur iva muḍhvata  
     V. 28.8cd.  

(xii) S'okasyāya kada pāram rāghavo dhigamīyati /  
     plavamānāḥ pariṣṭānto hatanaḥ sāgare yathā  
     V. 37.5.  

(xiii) haṃmān mārutagatir mahānaur iva sāgaram /  
     apāram aparīśrṇtaḥ puḍuluve gaṇgānaṃyam  
     V. 57.4.  

(xiv) Senā bhramati saṅkhyesu hatakārṇeva naur jale /  
     VI. 48.28cd.  

(xv) Kim iyam vyathitā senā muḍhavateva 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 Śīta 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 Śīta entangled in a tragic situation. She was all 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 overpowered 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.28.3cd are speeches by Sītā describing her condition. In both these similes she compares herself to a boat being driven away by a strong wind. The twelfth simile given V.37.5 is a speech of Sītā to Hanumat. Here she says expressing her anxiety for Rāma in trying to reassure 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 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 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 a 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 simile occurring in the Aranyakāṇḍa refers to the condition of chariots which are driven on an uneven ground. The simile occurs in a stanza addressed by Mārica to Rāvaṇa. Here he advises him to be more considerate and not to act hastily and rashly. While pointing out the dangers of such rash dealing in the matter of administration. He says that

\begin{quote}
1. ye tīkṣṇam-antrāḥ sacivā bhajyante sah ten vai / viśaṃeṣu rathāḥ sīghrāḥ mandaśarathayo yathā //
\end{quote}

III.41.12.
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 befall 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 is sure. 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 simile occurring in the Sundara-

1. Samniyacchati me krodham tvayi kāmāḥ Samuṭṭhitāḥ /
dravato mārgam āsādyhayāḥ iva susārathīḥ //
V. 22.3.
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 was required to see that the horses run thro­
ugh 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) vanām saritah saikān sarāmsi ca vihāyasā / sa kāipramatīyāya sarascāpādiva oyutah // III.54.7c-8b.
(ii) jyāmukta iva nārācaḥ pupluve yṛkṣavāṭikēm/ V.14.4cd.
(iii) jyāmukta iva nārāco mahāvegobhuyā pagatah/ V.57.14.ab.
seems to describe the speed of the object under consideration. The first simile contained in III.54.7c-8b describes Ṛavaṇā crossing many forests, rivers and lakes through the aerial route while āśë: kidnappiug Sītā. The two similes occurring in V.14.4cd and V.57.14ab refer to Hanumat flota-
ing 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 similes contained in II.12.76 and II.12.78 occur in the

1. (i) Satīm tvām aham atyantam vyavasyāmy asatīm satīm /
    rūpiṇīm viṣasam̐yuktāḥ pītveva madirām narah //
    II.12.76
(ii) anārya iti mām āryāḥ putravikrayiṇām dhruvām /
    dhikkariṣyanti rathyāsu surāpām brāhmaṇām yathā //
    II.121.78
(iii) tathā hyāttam idam rājyaḥ hṛtasāraṁ surām iva /
    nābhimantum alam rāmo naṣṭasowam ivādhvaram //
    II.61.18
course of the speech of Ďasăratha to Kaikeyī after hearing her drastic proposals, while the simile occurring in II.61.15 is a speech of Kausalyā to Ďasăratha. The remaining two similes contained in II.114.14 and VII.42.18c-19b are descriptions, the former refers to Ayodhya 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.

Ďasăratha 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 Ďasăratha how unwelcome

1.(iv) Kṣīṇa pānottamair bhinnaiḥ s'aravair abhisāpyatām /
gataśaundām iva dhvastām pānabhūmīḥ asaṃskṛtām //
II.114.14.

(v) sītāṃ ādāya hastenā madhu maireyakaṃ suci /
pāyayāmāsa kākutsthāḥ śacim 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 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. Ayodhya 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.42.180-191 refers to the pleasures of Rāma and Śītā. 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 Śītā for drinking it like Indra offering a cup 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. Williams thinks it to be a drink made from a combination of Sura 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.

as to sell off his son and that they would shower cries of 
it upon him in public as if he was like a Brahmin who had 
taken liquor. This suggestion of the pitiful plight of 
Dāsaratha 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 similes which suggest

1. (i) katham ātmasutān hitvā trayaseyasutam vibho / 
akāryam iva paśyāmaḥ śvamānasm iva bhojane //
that meat was taken as food in the age of the Rām. The simile contained in 1.62.14 is a speech of the sons of the sage Viśvāmitra to their father when he became ready to save Śunahṣepa from being offered as a sacrifice, even at the cost of his own sons; while the second simile occurring in the 1.62.17 is a curse inflicted by Viśvāmitra on his sons who refused to help him in his meritorious action of saving Śunahṣepa. 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 Vāsiṣṭha.

(ii) śvamānasbhojinah sarve vāsiṣṭhā i va jātiṣu /
      pūrṇam vargasahasram tu prthivyām anuvatsyathā.//
   I.62.17.

(iii) distyā tvam navadhid rāmo viśvamīśram ivāmiśam /
       VI.12.34cd.
The third simile which is a speech of Kumbhayaka to Rāvana suggests that meat, Āmiśa 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 reference occurring in the Ayodhyākānda. The line containing the simile occurring in II.48.28cd is a speech of the ladies of Ayodhya 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 saṁsrstāḥ smaḥ saunikā pasāvo yathā /

II.48.28cd.
Some similes in the Rāma 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 stage of the system of education in ancient India.

Dr. Radhakumud Mookerji admits that Ayodhya was a centre of culture and opines, "The educational and cultural conditions of the country in that age are seen at their best at Ayodhya, the capital of kings Dasaratha and Rama."

1. (i) aham tām ānayiseṣāṁ naṣṭāṁ vedārthāṁ yathā /
   IV.6.5ab.
   (ii) tasya sandidhiḥ buddhir mahuḥ sitem nirikṣyā tu /
   āṃśayāṇāṁ ayoṣṇa vidyām prāṣṭhīlam iva //
   V.15.38
   (iii) aham aupayikaḥ bhāryaḥ tasyaiva vasudāpateḥ /
   vratasātasya viprasya vidyeva viditātmah //
   V.21.17c-18b
   (iv) bhāvam na cāṣṭānam anupradātum aham
   dvijō mantram ivādvijāya / V.22.5cd.

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 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 Hanumāt when he happened to see Sītā for the first time in the Asakavanaṇika. 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 Asmāyaṇas. The Asmāyaṇa 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 'Vidita\text{\textit{atmanah}}' used in this stanza suggests. So it can be assumed that this knowledge about Atman 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 S\text{\textit{ita}} in this stanza.

The fourth simile occurring in V.28.5cd is a soliloquy of S\text{\textit{ita}}. The stanza describes her reaction to the threat of R\text{\textit{avana}} 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 R\text{\textit{avana}}. 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. Brahmans, Kṣatriyas and Vaiṣyas and it was not extended to the Śūdras who were considered as Advijas because they were not granted the right to initiation - 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 used and the diagnosis 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 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 similes which are worthy of note in this connection. The first simile in this connection

1. (i) vīryaḥīnām ivāśaktām kṣātrādharmena bhārgava/
avajānāsi me tejayā pasya medya 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 Dāsaratha. The third simile occurring in II.12.70c-71b is a speech of Dāsaratha addressed to Kaikeyī; while the fourth simile given in II.64.59 is a speech of Dāsaratha to Kausalyā.

(ii) nastacitto yathomatto vīparīto yathāgūrah / II.12.55ab.
(iii) idārūḥ tat tapati māṁ yan mayā sukṛtam tveyi / apathyavasījanopetaṁ bhuktamamam ivāturaṁ // II.12.70c-71b.
(iv) tasyāyaṁ karmano devi vipākah samutthitah / apathyaiḥ saha sampiḥkto vyādhir annaraso yathā // II.64.59.
(v) akāryam kāryasankāśam apathyam pāthyasamudritam / II.109.2cd.
(vi) nūnāṁ mamāṅgānī acirād anāryañō / sāstraiḥ śītaiḥ chetasyati rākṣasendrahō / tasminnāgaracchati lokeśāthe
garbhaṅghajantaṁ iva śalyekṛntah // V.28.6.
(vii) etena khalu jīviṣye bheṣajaranāturo yathā / V.66.14cd.
(viii) kada nu cārubimboṣṭham tasyā padmaṁ ivānena / īśad umnayam pāsyāmi rasayamānī ivāturaṁ // 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.29.6 is a speech of Sītā in which

(ix) sa ca na pratijagṛāna rāvaṇaḥ klāk kālacoditaḥ /
ucyamānam hitam vākyam viparīta ivauṣadhām //
VI.17.15.

(x) kālaḥ kāncana-sammahās tasmin tuṃ sāmāśāḥ /
smṛtyādyante sāilendrā dīptauṣadhivananī iva //
VI.44.5

(xi) tāni nirdahyamānāṁ dūraṁ pracaṅkāśīre /
himavacchikharāṇīva dīptauṣadhivananī ca //
VI.75.24c-25b.

(xii) dīpo netrāturasyeva pratikūlāsi me dṛḍham /
VI.118.17cd

(xiii) trayāṁ sukeśasya sutāṁ tretāṅgaṁ tejasah /
vivrddham agamaṁ tatra vṛddhayopēṣita iva //
VII.5.86-9b.
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 Lanka blazing with the flames of fire, and the thirteenth simile given in VII.5.8c-9b describes the three sons of a demon named Sukesā 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 Dasyāratha'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. 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 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 occurred in the food it created a bad effect on the patient. Here the material as well as the food are also hinted by the use
Thus 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 Apañhya 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 Pañhya and Apañhya food. If such a discrimination was not exercised, the effects would be harmful.

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 Śītā might have told him when he saw her in Lāṅkā 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 similies 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 Lāṅkā 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 Ramayana.

The simile in V.28.6 which is a speech of Sītā expresses her anxiety in the face of Rāvana'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 'sālya' 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 assessed safely that the reference does suggest the existence of a practice of surgery.

There are references contained in the similes in the Rāmāyaṇa, 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 kāmaṛyaḥ parjanyah prthivīṁ iva/
    sa kāmapāsaparyasto mahātejā mahīpatiḥ //
    II.31.12.
(ii) agastyaṁ kauśikam caiva tāvubhaṁ brahmaṇottamaṁ /
    ardāyāhūya saṁmitre ratghaiḥ sasyam ivāṁgubhiḥ //
    II.32.13
(iii) hanyamānem tu tat sainyāṁ paśyāmi saravṛṣṭibhīṁ /
    indreṇevottāmām sasyam āhatam tvāmaṁvṛṣṭibhīṁ //
    III.34.8
(iv) vātātapatkāntam iva praṇaśtaṁ varaṇa bijaṁ
    pratisaṅgaharsa //
    V.29.60cd.
(v) tvām drṣṭvā priyavaktāraṁ samprahṛṣyāmi vānara /
    ardhasaṅgātasaṁya eva vṛṣṭim prāpya vāsundhara //
    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 Rāmāyāṇa.

The first simile contained in II.31.12 refers to Dasharatha. 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 Āruapaṅkha 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 Hanumāt.

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 Hanumāt, 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 sixth simile occurring in III.34.8 refers to a danger which is felt very much for the crops.
Ipha says here describing the attack of Rama and Laksmana on the armies of the demons in the Dandakaranya that she feels the destruction of the army effected by incessant shower of arrows thrown by Rama. 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 lasting 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 Rama 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 similes in the Rāmāyaṇa 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 Rāmāyaṇa buildings, gardens, tanks, wells, lakes etc. were constructed.

1. (i) tād adrikūṭācalo megha sanmibham
t mahā vimāno yama vēsma saṅghavat /
avāryamāṇah praviveśa sarathih,
prabhūtaratnam makaro yathārṇavam //
II.15149.

(ii) prabhūnā taṭa vistīrṇām vājīm iva hṛtotpaiṃ //
II.114.18cd.

(iii) amī mayūrāḥ sōbhante pranrtiyantās tātastalāḥ /
svaiḥ pakṣaiḥ pavanoddhūṣāṁ gavākṣaiḥ sphāṭikaiḥ iva/
IV.1.36c-37b.

(iv) cakravākīva bharatāram prsthato'nugata-vanam /
viṣamam dandanāraṇyam udyānam iva yāṅganā //
IV.30.65

(v) asōbhata mahāsetuḥ sāmanta iva sāgare/
VI.22.80cd.

(vi) vajrauṣṭis tu maṁdeṇa puruṣīṇā niḥato raṇe /
papāta sarathaḥ sāvah purāṭṭa iva bhūtale //VI.43.30.

(vii) Sarasīva mahāgharme sūpakaiṇe baḥhuvaṭuḥ /
VI.98.1cd.
The first simile occurring in II.15.49 describes the palace of Rāma in full details. The second simile describes a Vapi 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 Laksmana.

The fourth simile occurring in IV.30.65 which refers to Sītā, compares the Dāndakāranya 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 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 Dasaratha to Rāma. The poet 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 'mahāvimānottamvasma'
is important. Prof. M.M. Williams explains the word saying "Other descriptions make the vimâna 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 'Vimâna' in the Râmâyâna 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 Râma 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 Râmâyâna had reached.

The word 'adrikâtaalcâlamegha - sambhāham' suggests the height of the building.

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

1. A Sanskrit - English Dictionary - p.980 column l. by Prof. Monier Williams
This suggests that the construction of such a vāpī or pond was in vogue in the age of the Rāma. 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 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 upasmaśa. The beautiful description of As'okavanikā in the Sundarakānda 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 Rāma 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 'attā' used in this stanza is significant; it suggests
that high towers or terraces were constructed in the buildings. The fall of the demon Vajranäs is compared to 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 Rámâyana. Thus all these similes which refer to the constructions of buildings, bridges, gardens and such other things suggest that the society was an advanced stage and the arts and sciences of architecture and sculpture were developed and cultivated in the age of the Rám.

In some similes of the Rám. the mountain are

1. (i) ātmajahāṁ ca ratnāṁ bhūsito bhūsanttamaih / dhūtiṁ manditah śailo vividhaṁ himvāṁiva //

VI.22.20c-21b.
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.69.37cd describes Āṅgada; while the third simile given in VI.108.26 describes Rāvana. 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 Rām.

\[(ii)\] rarājāngadasannadhāḥ sadhātur iva parvataḥ /
VI.69.37cd.

\[(iii)\] tamrah pitāḥ sitāḥ svetāḥ patitāḥ sūryarāmasayaḥ /
drugante rāvanaśyāṅge parvaḥ tave dhātavaḥ //
All these references contained in the similes of the Rāmāyaṇa which throw light on the various aspects of the culture and civilization as depicted in the Rāmāyaṇa 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 material 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.