CHAPTER FOUR

METAPHOR

4.1. Metaphor and The Book of Isaiah

Next to simile, metaphor is the other dominant trope that often attracts every reader of The Book of Isaiah. But before we go into details, a look at the theoretical aspects of metaphor is in order. The most common metaphor is one in which there is direct comparison. Wales quotes from various sources (1989: 295-296): Aristotle in his Poetic sees metaphor as a trope based on similitude and in Dr. Johnson's Dictionary metaphor is defined as a simile compressed in a word. It is a figure of speech in which one thing is described in terms of another. It is a basic figure in poetry. The comparison in metaphor is usually implicit; whereas in simile, it is explicit. (Cuddon 1991: 542) It is a figure of speech in which two unlike objects are compared by identification or by substitution of one for the other. They opine that metaphors like many other figures of speech are common in every day conversation. Wales says:

"What is of interest in semantics and literary criticism is the motivation behind the analogies made, and the particular semantic features which bind X and Y together: or in the terms of Richards (1936), the tenor (topic) and vehicle (analogue). Tenor and vehicle must have some similarity in order for the analogy to seem appropriate, yet sufficiently different, in dramatic or
descriptive metaphors, for the analogy to seem striking and fresh. Indeed, in some cases it may not always be easy to identify precisely, or at first reading, the ground or motivation for the analogy, and the indeterminacy or ambiguity that results in Empson's (1930) terms makes metaphor a powerful source of multiple meaning. (And in such cases a paraphrase by a simile is not always obvious. See further Nowotny 1962; Leech 1969.) Metaphor, in its expression of the familiar by the unfamiliar, is a good example of the process of defamiliarization and is particularly significant, therefore, in poetic language. For the same reasons it is also exploited, visually and linguistically, in the register of advertising (cornflakes associated with sunshine; petrol with tigers, etc.)" (1989: 295)

Not all metaphors take the syntactic and propositional form of X is Y; and as this equation itself illustrates, a full appreciation of metaphor depends not only on the senses of individual words but also on the interpretation of the lexical items and syntax in the context. Not all metaphors are nouns, moreover; with metaphorical verbs the figure of personification is particularly associated.

In Generative Grammar, the metaphor is a deviation, the selection restriction of subject and verb are here violated: stands tiptoe on would normally co-occur with nouns marked with animate/human reference (as also jocund normally).

The substitution of the familiar verb phrase by the apparently anomalous noun phrase affects not only the verb but contiguously the subject: it is day which is personified, and acquires by contagion the connotations also perhaps of youthful impishness.
Metaphors can work in even more extended ways, across whole passages or stanzas, to provide a frame of reference, or means of themaetic coherence. In Arnold's Dover Beach the metaphor of the sea of Faith informs the imagery of most of the sonnet, and appears to give rise to related metaphors (the world as a beach). (See also Wales 1989: 296.)

Metaphor is not peculiar to literary or to semi-literary language like advertising alone. We use or hear hundreds of metaphors in everyday speech, in slang, in public speaking, in news reporting, etc. As post-structuralists like de Man (1979) have also stressed, they are part of the fabric of language, of ideology. But they are so commonly used that, unlike the striking metaphors of poetry, we have in many cases ceased to be aware that figurative meaning is involved (the pound recovers; the war against inflation; black hole). (Wales 1991: 295-296) Davidson (1978), however, says, "similes are (trivially) true; but most metaphors are (patently) false." Though Davidson attaches falsehood to this figure, in the text it doesn't appear to create any aura (halo) of falsity as the whole world is a manifestation of a metaphor of the Supreme Omnipresent divine power. Looking at metaphor from this viewpoint, it can be inferred that metaphors -- compressed similes -- are used to augment and add variety to the literary beauty of The Book of Isaiah. What Herbert Read observes: [metaphor] "is the synthesis of several units of observation into one commanding image; it is the expression of a complex idea, not by analysis, nor by
abstract statement, but by a sudden perception of one objective relation." (Soskice 1992: 16) Thus it appears quite relevant if one closely studies the metaphors of *The Book of Isaiah*.

4.2. Types of Metaphor

In *The Book of Isaiah*, the metaphors follow the similes not in one or two but many ways; a minute study reveals an underlining close nexus between the two being parallel yet having some distinctive features of their own. Like the simile, most of the metaphors are drawn from the repertoire of imagery but only once in the form of metaphor, for instance in 42:3, *bruised reed* and *smoldering wick* appear as metaphor. Further, like the simile, we also notice that the new images are used showing ever expanding canvass of Isaiah's imagery. For an instance, the image of arrow below is used only once as a metaphor:

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of his hand he hid me; he made me into a polished arrow and concealed me in his quiver.
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49:2
So far as the pattern is concerned, like the simile, the metaphor also appears in single, paired, clustered and epic forms. The metaphors, however, are evidently less in number compared to the similes. Secondly, the metaphors at places become so much symbolic that the metaphors cease to remain as metaphors. In other words, they become symbols which will be discussed in the next part. We enumerate all the metaphors in *The Book of Isaiah* at the end of the chapter.

4.2.1. Single Metaphor

Though in terms of occurrence paired metaphors are more compared to single metaphors, we take up the latter for the sake of convenience of description. Let us look at a few examples from the text. The metaphors are endowed with the potential to vivify in graphic terms the most cognitive manifestation, that is, God and religion. For example, the metaphor *the Rock eternal* brings out God’s unwavering and unflinching concern for His Creation:

Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD, the LORD, is the Rock eternal.

26:4
The metaphor evokes a concrete picture of abstract divinity and thereby strives to boost up people's trust in such invisible powerful divine Supreme.

Isaiah's deftness, so far as the metaphor is concerned, is further evident in the following example:

He shakes the nations in the sieve of destruction; he places in the jaws of the peoples a bit that leads them astray.

30:28

First of all, the tenor shakes the nations has the vehicle shakes sieve, a familiar image drawn from everyday agricultural and domestic activity. Shaking sieve has a positive outcome; similar is the case with shaking/destroying nations, God's ultimate purpose behind shaking/destroying nations is, in fact, that of a shaking sieve which filters out good from bad, wanted from unwanted.

In syntactic features, it is called vocative which displays tenor and vehicle without verb. Without a verb which indicates "X is Y", appositive word couples and works as a metaphor. An example is:
Do not be afraid, O worm Jacob, O little Israel, for I myself will help you," declares the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.

41:14

The tenor Jacob is called *worm* here. This is another case of single metaphors.

Besides vocative, the appositive metaphor with a preposition is another type of single simile. An example is:

See, I have refined you, though not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.

48:10

Here, *affliction* is referred to as *furnace* in apposition. Affliction is an abstract concept but sensed by the heat of furnace. This furnace appears twice (chs 38, 48) symbolically and metaphorically (48:10)

With the same structure of apposition, *injustice* is compared to heavy bondage of *chains*:
"Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?  

Here, \textit{chains} and \textit{injustice} are appositive. The tenor \textit{injustice} is metaphorically referred to the vehicle \textit{chains}.

How evil was prevalent at the time of Isaiah is described in this way \textit{whoever shuns evil becomes a prey}. The image of \textit{prey} comes from wild animal images. The man who struggles to live truthfully but fails is metaphorically referred to as \textit{prey}.

Truth is nowhere to be found, and whoever shuns evil, becomes a \textit{prey}. The LORD looked and was displeased that there was no justice.

One of the important concepts of metaphor is that what one object is compared to the other depends not on the objects
themselves but on their character. The example below shows that infertility of a eunuch is compared to that of a dry tree. Here, *infertility* is the common character.

"The LORD will surely exclude me from his people." And let not any eunuch complain, "I am only a dry tree."

56:3

Another way of single simile supported by appositive clause and phrase is given below:

possess the land forever. They are the shoot I have planted, the work of my hands, for the display of my splendor.

60:21

The Israelites are described as the *shoot* originated and grown by God. The farmer's joy after *sprouting* is connotated to the
4.2.2. Paired Metaphor

Like the paired similes, the paired metaphors outnumber the other types of metaphors. Both the paired and the clustered metaphors seem to be a powerful tool of rhetoric and emphasis in the text.

Let us examine a few examples to see how the metaphors function.

The example below consists of two tenors: lie and falsehood, and two vehicles: refuge and hiding place respectively.

You boast, 'We have entered into a covenant with death, with the grave we have made an agreement. When an overwhelming scourge sweeps by, it cannot touch us, for we have made a lie our refuge and falsehood our hiding place.'

28:15

Both the tenors—lie and falsehood—are abstract. They, however, are picturized in concrete images of refuge and shelter.
which are drawn from everyday life. It is noteworthy that both tenors are semantic repetition and so are the vehicles. This has been observed as one of the characteristics of the paired and the clustered simile in the proceeding chapter as well. Thus, the metaphors here also seem to closely follow the similes.

The two abstract but familiar human experiences, *adversity* and *affliction* are equated with *bread* and *water* in the example below, the vehicles forcefully bring out the indispensable nature metaphorically of adversity and affliction. Thus, the poet manages to convey a positive outlook towards adversity and affliction.

Although the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, your teachers will be hidden no more; with your own eyes you will see them.

30:20

In the example below, the metaphor is found metonymically used: God is compared to a glorious crown which metonymically expresses an affluent and prosperous king. The other metaphor *a beautiful wreath* adds fragrance to the glory of king. In other words, Isaiah wishes to draw the word portrait of God, that is, glorious and at the same time fragrant. The example shows that
pairing is not just piling up of images but heaping up ideas on ideas.

In that day the LORD Almighty will be a glorious crown, a beautiful wreath for the remnant of his people.

Paired metaphor whose tenors are concealed in the context is found in the form of semantical antithesis. This seems a new way of handling paired metaphors in the example below:

Their stronghold will fall because of terror; at sight of the battle standard their commanders will panic,"declares the LORD, whose fire is in Zion, whose furnace is in Jerusalem.

At the time of the Assyrian attack on Judah, God is the protector for His people. His protection is in Zion which is a pleonasm for Jerusalem. Here, the tenor is only one, viz,
protection which is hidden, and vehicles are fire and furnace.

Unlike this one, another paired metaphor is an example of extended and interrelated metaphor in the example below:

..........................................

your eyes will see Jerusalem, a peaceful abode, a tent that will not be moved; its stakes will never be pulled up, nor any of its ropes broken.

33:20

The tenor Jerusalem is elaborated upon with the vehicle tent whose equipments stakes and ropes are chained consecutively and extended. Both stakes and ropes are interrelated images drawn from everyday life. It is clearly an example of a functional metaphor.

Other metaphors appearing in pairs are: bruised reed, smoldering wick. Both are from different semantic fields but share the same tenor helplessness. Wick and reed with metaphor appear only once each, and this shows Isaiah’s deftness of handling figures of imagery. It shares freshness and vitality.
A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice;

42:3

Another metaphor which functions through verbs in pair, namely, rain and shower in rain and righteousness, and shower and righteousness. It creates the image of pouring down righteousness.

"You heavens above, rain down righteousness; let the clouds shower it down. Let the earth open wide, let salvation spring up, let righteousness grow with it; I, the LORD, have created it.

45:8

Enumerating type of paired metaphor is one which presents totally dissimilar images from different semantic fields. This seems unusual, for Isaiah draws images which are from interrelated semantic range. The first and only image of this kind in Isaiah appears in metaphor, that is, the image of dogs, here.
They are dogs with mighty appetites; they never have enough. They are shepherds who lack understanding; they all turn to their own way, each seeks his own gain.

56:11

Here, the two metaphors *dogs* and *shepherds* are drawn from altogether of different semantic fields. Their mutual contrast brings out the abominable character of the people.

In the harmonious combination of similes, appositive metaphors are found in the same syntax. An example is:

He put on righteousness as his breastplate, and the helmet of salvation on his head; he put on the garments of vengeance and wrapped himself in zeal as in a cloak.

59:17

Here, *salvation* is compared to *helmet*, and *vengeance* to *garments*. They are from the same semantic field and concretize
the image of salvation and vengeance. Here, it is to be noted that both metaphors are drawn from different semantic fields.

Avoiding the general syntax of metaphor X is Y, object and objective complement appear together. This is a metaphor of a somewhat unconventional structure.

bronze, and iron in place of stones. I will make peace your governor and righteousness your ruler.

60:17

Here, peace is an abstract concept. However, it is expressed with concrete image governor. In the same way, righteousness is referred to as ruler. Thus the abstract concepts are concretized and vivified.

Correspondingly, an abstract concept is visualized with the help of metaphors.

For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of
righteousness, as a ........................................

61:10

A paired metaphor appears with two vehicles for one tenor. That is, smoke and fire which are for such people.

who say, 'Keep away; don't come near me, for I am too sacred for you!' Such people are smoke in my nostrils, a fire that keeps burning all day.

65:5

In the example above, salvation which is an abstract concept becomes garments which is perceptible, and righteousness, robe. Garments images become dominant ones.

With the traditional structure of X is Y, a paired metaphor in parallelism generates another general image.

This is what the LORD says: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house you will build for me? Where will my resting place be?"
Here, *heaven* is compared to *thron*, *earth* to *footstool*, but two of them constitute the third image, *king*.

### 4.2.3. Clustered Metaphor

So far as occurrence is concerned, clustered metaphors are fewer than others. One possible reason seems to be that while Isaiah wants to be rhetorical and emphatic, at the same time he doesn’t wish his readers to lose track of his central message.

> "Woe to him who quarrels with his Maker, to him who is but a potsherd among the potsherds on the ground. Does the clay say to the potter, ‘What are you making?’ Does your work say, ‘He has no hands’?"

45:9

Sometimes, but rarely, we have a verse which has four metaphors within:
Yet, O LORD, you are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.

God is called Father and potter, we is clay and work, so the first metaphor covers the contents of the other three.

4.2.4. Epic Metaphor

The next is an example of an epic metaphor, sometimes even called extended metaphor. (Dictionary of Stylistics, p.296) The presence of epic metaphors in the text is not surprising at all because it is an epic description of God’s anger, judgement and finally salvation. Such metaphors definitely impose an aura of not only the grandeur of theme but style as well.

Another example below shows once again an organic metaphor:

Look now, you are depending on Egypt, that splintered reed of a staff, which pierces a man’s hand and wounds him if he leans on it! Such is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who depend on him.
Isaiah manages to give vent to his abhorrence for Egypt; he finds that Egypt is like a splintered reed of a staff. It pierces a man's hand and wounds him. Through the image of splintered reed of a staff, Isaiah describes the shattered condition of Egypt vividly.

Two tenors and two vehicles creating situational development are to be found in two respective sentences in the example below:

righteousness to his service? He hands nations over to him and subdues kings before him. He turns them to dust with his sword, to windblown chaff with his bow.

Here, the tenor is kings which is compared to dust and windblown chaff. The two vehicles symbolically refer to insignificance and lightness; the kings' ultimate plight will be that of dust and windblown chaff.
Watchman in the example below does not refer to a watchman but metaphorically refers to those who are looking after Israel. Such people are blind and ignorant. Another metaphor *mute dog* refers to their inactivity. This image is further extended. Thus, it is an example of an extended or an epic metaphor.

Israel's watchmen are blind, they all lack knowledge; they are all mute dogs, they cannot bark; they lie around and dream, they love to sleep.

56:10

An example below, *images* is compared to *wind* and *confusion*; the two vehicles apart from being abstract are in all aspects completely dissimilar to the tenor. Therefore, this is an example of mixed metaphor, that is, faulty metaphor. Such examples, however, are few and far between.

See, they are all false! Their deeds amount to nothing; their images are but wind and confusion.

41:29
In the example below, *peace* is metaphorically compared to a *way*. Further, the way is described to be devoid of justice. Finally, the crooked road is a further extension of the same image.

The way of peace they do not know: there is no justice in their paths. They have turned them into crooked roads; no one who walks in them will know peace.

59:8

Comparing one image to others in continuous clauses, Isaiah uses epic metaphors effectively in verses.

For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign LORD will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations.

61:11

Here, the role of *soil* is to make the *sprout* come up and *garden* causes *seeds* to grow. With the same syntax and verbs
from the same semantic field, *righteousness* and *praise* which are abstract nouns are referred metaphorically to *sprout* and *seed*.

4.3. Syntax of Metaphor

Metaphor is a figure of speech in which two unlike objects are compared by identification or by the substitution of one for the other. The comparison, however, is not always so direct. This is how a simple or a concealed metaphor is composed.

4.3.1. Simple Metaphor

A metaphor directly expressed is *Simple Metaphor*. This has more frequency in the text. We had a glance at the grammatical structure of the metaphor, that is, the typical metaphor which has the arrangement *X is Y*, and of the appositive metaphor with a preposition *of* and of the appositive without a preposition. In every instance, the tenor or the vehicle/s are unconfused. For an example:

Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist.
Here, righteousness is compared with belt, and faithfulness with sash. Appositive example is found as below:

Babylon, the jewel of kingdoms, the glory of the Babylonians' pride, will be overthrown by God like Sodom and Gomorrah.

*Babylon* is repeated with the words *the jewel of kingdoms* and *the glory of the Babylonians' pride*. This is arranged in apposition, and they all are subjects according to the parts of speech.

### 4.3.2. Concealed Metaphor

Compared to the simple metaphor, the concealed metaphor is as the name suggests without the tenor. It, however, does not mean that concealed metaphor is vague. The hidden tenor may be insinuated noticeably or may not but be evident enough if one carefully examines the context.

An example below shows how a concealed metaphor works
unquestionably. Here, *Jacob* is metaphorically referred to as a tree; further the image of tree is extended with associated images, *viz*, *root*, *bud*, *blossom*, and *fruit*. With the help of this set of imagery, it is implied undoubtedly that the vehicle is plant/tree which is, however, not expressly mentioned in the verse:

> In days to come Jacob will take root, Israel will bud and blossom and fill all the world with fruit.

27:6

This vehicle vividly portrays the stability and prosperity of Jacob's reign in times to come in terms of germination, blossoming and fruition.

Another example of concealed metaphor is found among epic metaphors as below:

> Topheth has long been prepared; it has been made ready for the king. Its fire pit has been made deep and wide, with an abundance of fire and wood; the breath of the

.............
Topheth is an allusion. It is the area in the valley of Hinnom, just South of Jerusalem, where child sacrifices were made to the deity Molech. (Pfeiffer 1983: 1727) It refers metaphorically to God’s judgement which is the hidden tenor but is explained in the consecutive sentences.

Another kind of concealed metaphor using a verb is evident in the following example:

I clothe the sky with darkness and make sackcloth its covering.”

50:3

The scene of the sky being covered with a cloud is portrayed metaphorically here. The verb clothe implies cloud. In the example above, darkness and sackcloth stand for the tenor cloud which is hidden, but evident.

4.4. Functions of Metaphor
When a metaphor serves to illustrate an idea which can be expressed in other ways, it is merely *decorative*, whereas when it expresses a complex of thought and feeling that is so subtle or precise that it cannot be expressed in any other way, it is *organic* (Cuddon 1991: 660). In a word, replacibility of a figure or vehicle may decide whether it is decorative or organic.

4.4.1. Decorative Metaphor

In the example below, the Messiah is described as the one who wears the belt of righteousness and the sash of faithfulness. The tenors *righteousness* and *faithfulness* are compared to *belt* and *sash* which give potency and protection respectively. These metaphors can be replaced by similes in figures; alternatively, the vehicles in the structure can be replaced by some other visible objects.

Righteousness will be his belt and
faithfulness the sash around his waist.

11:5

Another example shows God’s eternality by comparing with a rock. Since it has a simple syntax, it can be replaced in figures and the vehicle *Rock* also can be replaced with some other
objects which have a durable character.

Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD, the LORD, is the Rock eternal.

26:4

4.4.2. Organic Metaphor

Compared to simple metaphor, this is placed somewhat at a relatively indispensable position in a structure and context.

In the example below, God promises to make the righteous man a threshing sledge. Apparently there is no nexus between the tenor and the vehicle and it seems to be a mixed metaphor. It, however, is functional as it subtly conveys the immense power of God. The image of a threshing sledge is further elaborated upon by using the images such as new and sharp with many teeth. Characteristically, an epic metaphor narrows the range of replacement of the metaphor. Thus, structurally or metaphorically, it seems to be difficult to replace threshing sledge by any other objects.

"See, I will make you into a threshing sledge, new and sharp, with many teeth. You will thresh the mountains and crush
them, and reduce the hills to chaff.

You will winnow them, the wind will pick them up, and a gale will blow them away. But you will rejoice in the LORD and glory in the Holy One of Israel.

41:15-16

*Threshing sledge* is closely associated with winnowing and chaff which turn it into a epic metaphor and further, highlight the omnipotence of God.

4.5. Relation between Metaphor and Simile

From the preceding discussion, it is evident that both the metaphors and the similes flow into each other at many levels. Like the similes, metaphors are also classified as single, paired, clustered and epic. Like the similes, there are many metaphors which are used only once. Thus, metaphors also seem to enhance the repertoire of imagery. Their interplay adds beauty and variety, and helps the text from being monotonous. Finally, the metaphors express profounder belief in God than the similes.
4.6. Symbolism in The Book of Isaiah

The word symbol is derived from the Greek verb *symballein* to throw together, and its noun *symbolon* mark, emblem, token or sign. (Cuddon 1991: 939) It is an object, animate or inanimate, which represents or stands for something else. A symbol is characterized by a translucence of the special [i.e. the species] in the individual. A symbol is different from an allegorical sign; the former has a real existence whereas the latter is arbitrary and imaginary.

Cuddon says about the examples as below:

*Scales symbolize justice; the orb and scepter, monarchy and rule; a dove, peace; a goat, lust; the lion, strength and courage; the bulldog, tenacity; the rose, beauty; the lily, purity; the Stars and Stripes, America and its States; the Cross, Christianity; the swastika (or crooked Cross) Nazi Germany and Fascism; the gold, red and black hat of the Montenegrin symbolizes glory, blood and mourning. The scales of justice may also be allegorical; as might, for instance be a dove, a goat or a lion.*

*Actions and gestures are also symbolic. The clenched fist symbolizes aggression. Beating of the breast signifies remorse. Arms raised denote surrender. Hands clasped and raised suggest supplication. A slow upward movement of the head accompanied by a closing of the eyes means, in Turkish, no. Moreover, most religious and fertility rites are rich with symbolic movements and gestures, especially the Roman Mass. (1991: 939)*

A literary symbol combines an image with a concept (words themselves are a kind of symbol). It may be public or private, universal or local. They exist, so to speak. Cuddon reviews:

"In literature an example of a public or universal symbol is a journey into
the underworld (as in the work of Virgil, Dante and James Joyce) and a return from it. Such a journey may be an interpretation of a spiritual experience, a dark night of the soul and a kind of redemptive odyssey. Examples of private symbols are those that recur in the works of W.B. Yeats: the sun and moon, a tower, a mask, a tree, a winding stair and a hawk.

Dante's *Divina Commedia* is structurally symbolic. In *Macbeth* there is a recurrence of the blood image symbolizing guilt and violence. In *Hamlet* weeds and disease symbolize corruption and decay. In *King Lear* clothes symbolize appearances and authority; and the storm scene in this play may be taken as symbolic of cosmic and domestic chaos to which unaccommodated man is exposed. The poetry of Blake and Shelley is heavily marked with symbols. The shooting of the albatross in Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* is symbolic of all sin and stands for a lack of respect for life and a proper humility towards the natural order. In his four *Quartets* T.S. Eliot makes frequent use of the symbols of Fire and the Rose. To a lesser extent symbolism is an essential part of Eliot's *Ash Wednesday* (especially Pt III) and *The Waste Land*.

In prose works the great white whale of Melville's *Moby-Dick* (the grand god) is a kind of symbolic creature - a carcass which symbol-hunters have been dissecting for years. Much of the fiction of William Golding (especially *Lord of the Flies*, *Pincher Martin* and *The Spire*) depends upon powerful symbolism capable of more interpretations than one. To these examples should be added the novels and short stories of Kafka, and the plays of Maeterlinck, Andreyev, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Synge and O'Neill.

In all these works we find instances of the use of a concrete image to express an emotion or an abstract idea; or, as Eliot put it when explaining his term objective correlative (q.v.), finding a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events, which shall be the formula of that particular emotion."(1991: 941)

Symbolism is another important dimension of Isaiah's literary beauty. The text abounds in all types of symbolism and it
contributes to the text in two ways: first, it helps to save the text from the monotony generated on account of the usage of just one type of symbolism; secondly, it helps Isaiah to convey abstract ontological and divine matters in concrete and vivifying and novel fashion. Further, Isaiah is replete with public/global, private/local and transcendental symbolism which are dealt with in great length in the following.

The ox knows his master, the donkey his owner's manger, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand."

1:3

Through the examples of ox and donkey, the author symbolically refers to all the domesticated animals which are loyal to their masters; the author finds it rather surprising that men have become disloyal and faithless to their creator.

4.6.1. Varieties of Symbolism

In the present discussion, symbolism is dealt with from two angles: one from the point of view of how the symbols function in the text, viz, public, private and transcendental, and second, from the point of view of number of symbols that appear
together, viz, single, paired, clustered etc.

4.6.1.1. Public, Private

A symbol, in the broadest sense of the term, is anything which signifies something else; in this sense all words are symbols. As commonly used in discussing literature, however, symbol is applied only to a word or set of words that signifies an object or event which itself signifies something else; that is, the words refer to something which suggests a range of reference beyond itself. Some symbols are conventional or public; thus the Cross, the Red, White, and Blue, the Good Shepherd are terms that signify symbolic objects of which the further significance is fixed and traditional in a particular culture. Poets, like all of us, use such conventional symbols; many poets, however, also use private or personal symbols, which they develop themselves. Often they do so by exploiting pre-existing and widely shared associations with an object or action - for example, the general tendency to associate a peacock with pride and an eagle with heroic endeavor, or to associate the rising sun with birth and the setting sun with death, or to associate climbing with effort or progress and descent with surrender or failure. Some poets, however, often use symbols whose significance they mainly generate for themselves, and these set the reader a more difficult problem in interpretation.

M.H. Abrams in his well-known exegesis says:
"Take as an example the word rose, which in its literal meaning is a kind of flower. In Burns's line, *O my love's like a red, red rose*, the word *rose* is the object of comparison in a simile; and in the lines by Winthrop Mackworth Praed

She was our queen, our rose, our star;
And then she danced - O Heaven, her dancing!

the word *rose* is a metaphor. In the long medieval dream vision *The Romance of the Rose* we read about a half-opened rose to which the dreamer's access is aided by a character called *Fair Welcome*, but impeded or forbidden by other characters called *Reason*, *Shame*, and *Jealousy*: we readily recognize that the whole narrative is an allegory about an elaborate courtship, in which most of the agents are personified abstractions and the rose itself represents the lady's love. Then we read William Blake's poem *The Sick Rose*:

*O Rose, thou art sick.*
The invisible worm
That flies in the night
In the howling storm:
Has found out thy bed
Of crimson Joy:
And his dark secret love
Does thy life destroy.

This rose is not the vehicle for a simile or metaphor, because it lacks the paired subject - *my love*, or the girl referred to as *she*, in the examples just cited - which is characteristic of these figures. And it is not an allegorical rose
since, unlike the flower in *The Romance of the Rose*, it is not part of an obvious double order of correlated references, one literal and the second allegorical, in which the allegorical reference of the rose is precisely fixed by its function within the literal narrative. Blake's rose is a rose—yet it is also something more than a rose: words such as bed, joy, love, which do not comport literally with an actual flower, together with the sinister tone and the intensity of the feeling, press the reader to infer that the described object had a further range of unspecified reference which makes it a symbol. But Blake's rose is a personal symbol and not—like the symbolic rose in the closing cantos of Dante's Paradise and other Christian poems—an element in a set of traditional and widely known religious symbols, in which concrete objects of this passing world are regarded as signifying the truths of a higher and eternal realm. Only from the implicit suggestions in Blake's poem itself—the sexual connotations of bed and love, especially in conjunction with joy and worm—supplemented by our knowledge of related elements in Blake's other poems, as well as by our normal associations with the objects described in this poem, do we gradually infer that Blake's lament for a crimson rose which has been entered and sickened unto death by a dark and secret worm symbolizes the destruction wrought by furtiveness, deceit, and hypocrisy in what ought to be a frank and joyous relationship of physical love. Various critics of the poem, however, have proposed differing interpretations of its symbolic significance. It is an attribute of many private symbols and one reason why they are an irreplaceable literary device, that they suggest a direction, or a broad area of reference rather than, like an item in an allegorical narrative, a single and specific reference." (1989: 168-170)

4.6.1.1.1. Private Symbols

The examples of Private Symbols are as below:
Even the pine trees and the cedars of Lebanon exult over you and say, "Now that you have been laid low, no woodsman comes to cut us down."

14:8

Here, through the pine trees and the cedars, the author refers to the powerful people of Lebanon. The two symbols are private because hardly any other biblical author has used them in this sense.

Freshness of images is retained from private symbols in the various parts of the text. An example is:

with the noise of your harps; maggots are spread out beneath you and worms cover you.

14:11

Here, maggots and worms symbolize Isaiah's understatement regarding death. These symbols show Isaiah's intense but controlled anger but with patience.
While Isaiah employs symbols, two or three meanings are brought into operation to enhance the contents. An example is:

Yet some gleanings will remain, as when an olive tree is beaten, leaving two or three olives on the topmost branches, four or five on the fruitful boughs," declares the LORD, the God of Israel.

Here, *gleanings* and *olives* symbolize the remnants of the Israelites and Israel respectively. Even *two or three*, and *four or five* stand for a few people symbolically, and *branches* and *boughs* stand for Israel as well.

Another example of symbolism describing God's activity as a farmer's work is:

When a farmer plows for planting, does he plow continually? Does he keep on breaking up and harrowing the soil?

28:24
Here, not only specific action but general description in the whole verse is symbolical: *plow, break up* and *harrow* connotate God's step-by-step punishment for future prosperity.

The image of God creator is symbolized with the action of a man who measures the waters in the hollow of his hand, marks off the heavens with the breadth of his hand:

*Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens? Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket, or weighed the mountains on the scales and the hills in a balance?*

40:12

As we have seen above, symbolism seen in the whole passages rather than in a word appears more frequently. An example is:

*No sooner are they planted, no sooner are they sown, no sooner do they take root in the ground, than he blows on them and they wither, and a whirlwind sweeps them away*
like chaff.

Serial activities, viz, planted, sown, take root, blow, wither and sweep show God's judgement on the Israelites symbolically.

However, symbolism of words is also found. An example is below:

"Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness and who seek the LORD:
Look to the rock from which you were cut and to the quarry from which you were hewn;

The words from the same semantic field, rock and quarry refer to God Almighty symbolically.

Such a word based symbolism is seen in contrast in an example below:
needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.

58:11

Here, *sun-scorched land* does not indicate a desert but desolation after God’s judgement. In the same way, *well-watered garden* is not a fertile land but prosperity after God’s forgiveness on the Israelites.

Another private symbol drawn from desert background keeps people’s familiarity and freshness together:

They hatch the eggs of vipers and spin a spider’s web. Whoever eats their eggs will die, and when one is broken, an adder is hatched.

59:5

Sin of the Israelites is described symbolically as they hatch the eggs of vipers, which means that they brood over poisonous evil, and spin a spider’s web which tries to trap others.
4.6.1.1.2. Public Symbol

Public symbols as the name suggests are those symbols whose meaning is evident to almost everyone; such symbols are parts and parcel of everyday language. Besides the private symbols through which Isaiah generates and emphasizes his viewpoint, he also uses public symbols quite frequently in the text.

For an example, material prosperity is beautifully and forcefully communicated through the image of a house and a field symbolically.

Woe to you who add house to house and join field to field till no space is left and you live alone in the land.

5:8

_House to house_ and _field to field_ here do not mean house or field as such. But they are symbolical expression of property and material prosperity which has become the ultimate aim of almost every human being on earth. Thus, when it is added, it refers to material affluence.

Another obvious public symbolism is _light_ and _fire_ in the
But now, all you who light fires and provide yourselves with flaming torches, go, walk in the light of your fires and of the torches you have set ablaze. This is what you shall receive from my hand: You will lie down in torment.

50:11

Here, the symbolic implication of fire and flaming torch is torture and suffering; fire and flaming torch are age old public symbol of torture and suffering in the hell. In other words, Isaiah perhaps is trying to imply that it is human being who has turned the earth into hell.

Building a road and removing the obstacles out of the way are the public symbol of inviting something or someone. The reference of building road and removing an obstacle out of the way does not refer to actual road construction nor removing any obstacles out of the way; both refer to paving the way for something or someone benign.

And it will be said: "Build up, build up,
prepare the road! Remove the obstacles out of the way of my people."

57:14

4.6.1.2. Single Symbolism

Like the simile, the metaphor and the other figures, symbols also appear single, in pair and in a cluster varying thereby symbolic mark.

Single symbolism drawn from nature is to be noted below:

Dimon's waters are full of blood, but I will bring still more upon Dimon—a lion upon the fugitives of Moab and upon those who remain in the land.

15:9

The lion here does not refer to the lion but symbolically death and destruction besmearing the whole land including waters of Dimon with blood.

Light in the example below symbolically refers to a leader or a ruler or a teacher who will guide and enlighten the people to righteousness on behalf of God, the creator.
he says: "It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth."

49:6

4.6.1.3. Paired Symbolism

The example of paired symbolism is to be found right at the beginning of the text.

The ox knows his master, the donkey his owner's manger, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand."

1:3

Ox and donkey symbolize mindless and senseless and stupid creature but they are, according to Isaiah, even better than men because they are rooted; they have their moorings and sense of fidelity. Isaiah gives vent to his bitterness towards men's
disloyalty to God symbolically through these two images: ox and donkey holding them superior to men.

Another noteworthy example of paired symbol is 14:8

Even the pine trees and the cedars of Lebanon exult over you and say, "Now that you have been laid low, no woodsman comes to cut us down."

14:8

In this case the symbols are drawn from nature; on account of the strength and height they successfully symbolize the rulers of Lebanon.

27:4 shows different type of paired symbolism. The symbolism is revealed through the words, march, fire, and battle used in talking about the enemies.

I am not angry. If only there were briers and thorns confronting me! I would march against them in battle; I would set them all on fire.

27:4
4.6.1.4. Clustered Symbolism

Verse 27:6 shows an example of clustered symbolism. Here, *root*, *bud* and *blossom* stand for firmness, expanding family prosperity respectively. All the three symbols, in fact, together refer to the whole process of regeneration and fruition.

In days to come Jacob will take root, Israel will bud and blossom and fill all the world with fruit.

27:6

Further, a noteworthy example of clustered symbolism is given below:

The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them.

11:6
With God's blessing nothing is impossible and Isaiah conveys through a series of symbols. There are two sets of symbols: one referring to peace, purity and love, and the other death and destruction. The harmony between these two antagonizing sets underlines that nothing is impossible for God. Surprisingly, the symbols are drawn from the animal world. Those symbols are symbolic.

Isaiah strikes to arouse feeling of utter desolation through a series of symbols in the following example:

Thorns will overrun her citadels, nettles and brambles her strongholds. She will become a haunt for jackals, a home for owls.

34:13

When Isaiah says the citadel will be enveloped by thorns and nettles and brambles and haunted by owls and jackles, he symbolically refers to the ultimate desolation that will overtake the citadels ruled by the unrighteous rulers.

4.6.2. Function of Symbolism

From the discussion of typology of symbolism, it is evident that Isaiah is a superb craftsman with perfect skill in handling
symbolism in a subtle and varied manner. It is unquestionably one of the landmarks of his style. It not only adds to the literary beauty saving the text from boredom and monotony but also creates meaning and foregrounds his viewpoint; at some places it highlights, at other it attracts everyone who encounters the text. Isaiah drives home his cherished message everlastingly in the inner self of the reader through symbols (besides of course the imagery, the simile, the metaphor and other figures). We now tabulate Isaiah's metaphors:

METAPHOR

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