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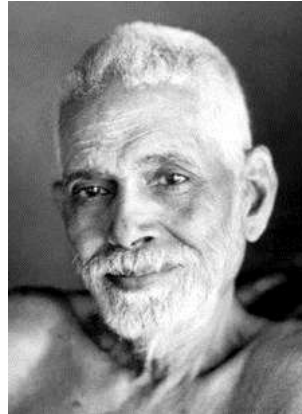
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## **Conceptualization of Metaphor in Maharshi Ramana - A Study of “The Marital Garland of Letters” and “The Song of Poppadum”**

**Kiran Sikka, M.Phil. Ph.D. Scholar**

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**Ramana Maharshi 1879-1950**

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Metaphor, a much discussed subject in literary discourse since the time of Aristotle, has continued to command serious attention even in contemporary thought as can be seen from the voluminous work appearing on the subject from time to time. Whether it is Andrew Ortony raising questions regarding metaphors as necessary for transmission of new ideas or Max Black defending his interaction view of metaphor or L. Jonathan Cohen's Semantics of Metaphor (Ortony, Andrew. 1993: 19-58) it is metaphor which has preoccupied the modern critical mind. Going beyond the stereotypes of the rational form of communication, metaphor leaps into areas where words or sentences are not merely seen as themselves but suggesting something else. The journey of a word - from known and apparent to suggest something, from explicit to implicit, from ordinary to extraordinary and from visual to mental - calls for many interpretations. Sometimes the ideas that go into mental construction, perception and understanding of a speaker's intension, when taken literally, do not make sense in the given context. It is here that metaphor stands functional as a mode of conceptualization which can be investigated with insights into the given language.

The present paper discusses conceptualization of metaphor in Maharshi Ramana's poetry.

### **The Saint-Poet, A Sage of *Jnana Marga***

Maharshi Ramana, a saint-poet, was born on 30<sup>th</sup> December 1879 as Venkatraman to an uncertified pleader Sundaram Aiyar and mother Alaggmal, in a village Tiruchuzhi, about thirty miles from Madurai. His father died when he was twelve and the family disintegrated. He was brought up by his mother and uncles. Intelligent but indifferent to his studies, though he learnt nothing much in school yet he reached higher classes. During this period, he did not show any inclination towards spirituality. It was in 1895 that he heard about *Arunachala* from an old couple and felt an inexplicable and indescribable ecstasy. In July 1896, he had a feeling of impending death which gave rise to many questions regarding dilemma of human life. He realized the ultimate revelation that the spirit transcending the body never dies.

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After this experience, Maharshi Ramana set out on a spiritual journey at a very tender age and attained self-realization at the age of seventeen. He sought liberation from the inherent tendencies of ego clouding the mortal humans throughout their lives. He was constantly aware of his identity with the Self — the deathless spirit. “The other thoughts might come and go like the various notes of music, but the ‘I’ continued like the fundamental *sruti* note that underlies and blends with all other notes,” (The Collected Works.2007: ix-xvii) he himself explains. This ‘I’ for him was liberation, a miracle, an awareness and an awakening. It was in this background that Venkatraman was named Maharshi Ramana —a title given to a great sage who inaugurates a new path. He opened a new path of *jnana marga* for his devotees who turned to him for spiritual instructions.

On his way to the attainment of supreme state of self-realization, he was inspired to write “The Five Hymns to Sri Arunachala” —an expression of attitude of the soul aspiring for union with God. The first of these hymns “The Marital Garland of Letters”, selected for the purpose of study in the present paper, is one of the most profound and moving poems written by Maharshi. The other poem “The Song of Poppadum” was composed for the purpose of giving spiritual instructions. The two poems present a contrast in the conceptualization of metaphors- the first being profound and intense, the other being lighthearted, humorous yet insightful. The present paper demonstrates metaphor as an integral part of his poetry and reveals a process of the poet’s conceptualization. The paper tries to explain and define metaphor, talks about conceptualization of metaphor and its embodiment in Maharshi’s poetry and concludes the discussion.

### **Metaphor Explored**

As already stated, metaphor has been one of the most baffling mysteries of human speech since the earliest times. In the West, the discussion of metaphor started with Aristotle in *Poetics*. Aristotle’s views have left an indelible influence on Western literary criticism and aesthetic theory. He talks of the style which raises poetry from commonplace to unusual and lofty by the use of ornamental words. For him, the greatest thing by far was to be a master of metaphor. It was a thing that could not be learnt from others. It was also a sign of genius, since a good metaphor implied an intuitive perception of the similarity in dissimilars. (House,

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Humphrey.1970: 121) He posits that perfection of style needs among many other things metaphor for transference by analogy. Metaphor was recognized merely for its ornamental value by the time of Aristotle. Aristotle's views were considered important for the later discussions of metaphor.

The journey of metaphor traverses a long distance from the classical period to modern age with contributions of Cicero, Augustine, Peter Ramus, Coleridge and George Lakoff—some of them talking in favour and others against metaphor. The list is inexhaustible and growing. Cicero in *De oratore* articulated a view of language as an ethical conduct and viewed metaphor as “potentially corruptive finery” (121-123). Augustine in middle ages insisted on considering metaphor as a trope and still conceded its power to exceed mimetic fidelity (Augustine, 1983: 535). In keeping with the sweeping changes that marked renaissance, Peter Ramus and Francis Bacon rejected the figurative aspect of language and metaphor in particular. Shakespeare and John Donne however invented Elizabethan and metaphysical metaphors by striking a balance between logic, reason and subjectivity of struggle of self-determination and self-knowledge. John Locke in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* rejects figurative language and considers metaphors as promoting wrong ideas and moving passions (Locke, John. 1979: 508). It was Coleridge in Romantic period who talked about poetry as self expressive and therefore offered a better view of nature because of exercise of modes like metaphor. Thus it becomes clear that metaphor continued to be discussed as an important mode of communication with writers either accepting it or rejecting it. It was accepted either as ornamental or enriching the intrinsic value of meaning in the form of language.

Coming to twentieth century, it was I.A. Richards who emphasized that the business of a poet was to give order and coherence to a body of experience and hence freedom to a body of experience (Richards, I.A. 1974: 23). The poet does so through many means, one among them is metaphor. In *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, Richards proposed two very useful terms “tenor” and “vehicle” while talking about metaphors, where the tenor is the idea conveyed or illuminated by the vehicle which is the actual figurative expression. The theory emphasized the conceptual incompatibility between the two terms. He further mentions that metaphors work for a number of

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reasons, other than that tenor and vehicle construct resemblances. Sometimes they also work due to disparities, sometimes through ambiguities, sometimes by creating new forms. Richards made a valuable contribution to the study of metaphor. (Richards. 1950: 87-112) Max Black in “More about Metaphor” made a strong case in favour of metaphor:

Conceptual boundaries not being rigid, but elastic and permeable; and because we often need to do so, the available literal resource of the language being insufficient to express our sense of the rich correspondences, interrelations, and analogies of domains conventionally separated; and because metaphorical thought and utterance sometimes embody insight expressible in no other fashion.( 33)

However, there are strong links between metaphors and other tropes as some of them work on vertical selections choosing among equivalent options on the basis of similarity, contrast, substitution, synonyms and antonyms, whereas others like metonymy work on horizontal combinations constituting syntactic links relating through contiguity and juxtaposition. Metonymy also characterizes the use of the part for the whole for example “nice set of wheels” for “nice car” or vice-versa. The sense has been further enlarged to encompass any substitution based on any kind of contextual contiguity. Metaphor in the general sense characterizes the substitution of one similar concept for another. The similarity may be explicit or implicit. As far as imagery is concerned, the images by themselves will not necessarily develop symbolic or metaphoric quality but metaphors and other related tropes result from a combination and manipulation of images. In fact images are the raw material used for producing figures of speech -- metaphor being one of them. In metaphors, things could be personified or images used could be mainly visual.

It is clear that most of the figurative language, whether metonymy, metaphor, oxymoron, imagery and similes etc., work on the principles of likeness or contrast. Since these two principles also underlie the way we think, reason and imagine, all figurative language seems to have conceptualized thus. Certain metaphorical associations are so deeply entrenched in our

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mode of sensibility and consciousness that we tend to think that there must be a similarity either in the concepts or the association in the concepts is a form of similarity. We think and talk in metaphors. Metaphors are an important part of our communication— whether written or spoken. Searle made an important observation when he compared irony and speech acts with metaphors. He said that the utterances may belong to any of the category but they do not make sense when taken literally. It makes sense when the hearer reinterprets to render it appropriate. (Ortony, 99) However, this should mean that basically simile, personification, imagery and synecdoche work on a principle of likeness or contrast in one way or other. Whereas simile draws direct comparison between two distinctly different things by making use of words ‘like’ and ‘as’, in metonymy the term applied for one thing is applied to another with which it has become closely associated e.g. ‘crown’ can stand for a king, in synecdoche a part stands for whole, in personification, an inanimate object or an abstract concept is spoken as if endowed with human attributes. Imagery is also used to signify figurative language as vehicles for similes and metaphors.

Metaphors have now been recognized as more than figurative devices. They were considered only the device of poetic imagination and the rhetorical flourish earlier. Previously viewed as characteristic of language alone, they were only a matter of words rather than thought or action. The whole idea underwent a complete change when George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in *Metaphors We Live By* rejected this view. They contend that metaphors are pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature( Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson.1980: 5). Andrew Ortony in his book *Metaphor and Thought* also recognized the importance of metaphors as their ability to provide alternative or new ways of viewing the world whereas so-called literal language was considered too restrictive because of its inability to provide those perspectives. For Ortony, metaphors are more than mere implicit comparisons— they are a use of language. ( Ortony, Andrew. 1993: 344)

Thus metaphors are now seen as more appropriate for conceptual domains rather than linguistic expressions as conceptualization of metaphors characterizes into ‘polysemy’ which may result

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into either many related or different senses of meanings. This makes metaphor a rather complex phenomenon which needs to be worked on more seriously to discover layers of meanings hitherto wrapped in obscurity and abstractness. This brings us to a point where we can draw certain generalizations about metaphors which can be applied to poetry since poetry is basically metaphorical:

1. Metaphors have now been recognized as figures of thought not merely of speech.
2. They pervade in our conceptual system i.e. the way we think.
3. Metaphors are related to other rhetorical figures e.g. simile, imagery, irony, personification and synecdoche etc. as all of them work on either the principle of contrast or of comparison.
4. Metaphors are necessary because literal meaning in a given context does not always make sense.
5. Metaphors are important to explain the world beyond senses. Physical reality is describable with the help of literal language but how to explain the ideas that are beyond physical reality—is a question that has been addressed by the use of metaphor.

### **Maharshi and Metaphor**

Maharshi's poetry is the depiction of an inner vision and conviction realized on his way to enlightenment. He belongs to the tradition of saints who were in direct contact with their absolute self and had even passed beyond the boundaries of senses in his earthly life. Before exploring the conceptualization of metaphor in Maharshi Ramana, it is important to trace his spiritual journey. Maharshi left Madurai forever to his uncle's home after his father's death. He had a sudden fear of death one day while sitting on the first floor of his uncle's house. The shock drove his mind inwards and the realization dawned on him that the deathless spirit of man is away from body, it is 'I' —the realized Self. This was a miraculous awakening in his life after which he was constantly aware of his identity with the Self. This was his philosophy of existence in which he remained immersed throughout his life after losing all interest in the manifested world. A conscious awareness with the *Atman*, the Absolute, the Spirit and Self of all brought Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com)

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ineffable bliss beyond life and death. All his poetry is an expression of this resplendent reality conceptualized in metaphors.

### **Study of Two Poems**

For the purpose of the present study, we have selected only two of his poems: “The Marital Garland of Letters” and “The Song of Poppadum” from *The Collected Works of Sri Ramana Maharshi*. Maharshi spoke most lovingly about “Five Hymns to Arunachala” from which “The Marital Garland of Letters” has been taken because these poems came to him most compellingly. He tried to suppress them but the hymns flowed on their own. While the first group of the poems are the most profound and moving poems that express the attitude of the soul aspiring for the union with God, the second one is the best example to show that the day-to-day mundane activities can be philosophical and teach a spiritual way of life through metaphors. It is the practice of self-enquiry which helps one to get rid of obstacles of mind like doubts, ignorance and unawareness. This practice is revealed through various metaphors conceptualized in his poetry.

Arunachala in South India is a hill, but for Maharshi it stands for ‘God’. “The Marital Garland of Letters” is a poem of 108 stanzas, where each stanza ends with “Oh Arunachala”. In Sri Arunachala Mahatmya, Maharshi calls Arunachala “a heart of the world” and “heart-centre of Siva”. To borrow Richards’s terms ‘tenor’ and ‘vehicle’, Arunachala is a vehicle for tenor God. The underlying connection between Arunachala and God is the quality of stability and permanence. ‘Arunachala’ has been used as a refrain in the poem stitching the poem as a thread stitches a cloth. All the poems in “Five Hymns to Arunachala” have metaphorical concepts but the first hymn The Marital Garland of Letters makes a more interesting study as it is full of profound ideas and removes the delusion of devotees.

Maharshi composed the first hymn “The Marital Garland of Letters” for Sadhus who used to go to Tiruvannamalai to beg for food. This is the first among the “Five Hymns to Arunachala”- the others being “The Necklet of Nine Gems”, “Eleven Verses to Arunachala”, “Eight Stanzas to

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Arunachala” and “Five Stanzas to Arunachala”. The introductory verse is an invocation to Sri Ganesa which celebrates the significance of Arunachala and Beacon:

The sudden rise of the blazing column of Annamalai in front of Brahma and Vishnu ...is symbolic of Heart Centre (Self) which shines of itself...

Getting rid of the ‘I am the body’ idea and merging the mind into the Heart to realize the Self as non-dual being ...is the beacon of light on Annamalai. (79)

Annamalai, as a blazing column in front of God Brahma and Visnu, is symbolic of *sphurana* of the heart centre as the realized self free of ego. The target domain in both the cases is *sphurana* i.e. burst forth. It indicates the blazing of the hill as well as realization of the heart. The common idea is the change in the hill because of glowing and change in the heart because of shedding ego. Arunachala displays a bright light. The heart centre displays a similar light when it realizes Self. The realization of heart is to get rid of the idea that self is the body. This awareness of non-dual being is the light in the heart. In “Self-enquiry”, Maharshi explains the idea by giving an example of a grain of rice hidden in the husk. When dehusked, it is rice. The self remains *jiva* bound by *Karma*. Released from the bondage of ignorance, it shines as *Siva*( 33). Thus Arunachala stands forth as realized self free of ego and ignorance.

### **The Marital Garland to Siva - Metaphor**

The poem begins with a prayer to God Ganpati to bless him. He says:

Gracious Ganpati with thy (loving) hand bless me, that I may make this a marital garland of letters worthy of Sri Arunachala, the bridegroom! (82)

At the outset, it is apparent that the words the Maharshi would write in God’s praise will form a marital garland for the bridegroom Arunachala as is the custom in Hindu marriages for a bride to put a garland around the bridegroom’s neck. The act symbolizes the union of two persons sought in marriage physically, mentally and spiritually. The idea runs throughout the poem in such beautiful expressions-“ honour me with the union with thyself”( 84), “ tear off these robes,

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expose me naked , then robe me with thy love”( 85), “ Enfold me body to body, limb to limb, or I am lost” ( 88) and “ Espouse me, I beseech Thee”( 90 ). The tone of the poem is evocative of earnest request interspersed with taunt “thou didst aim (at me) with darts of love and then devoured me alive”( 93) and rhetorical questions“ Does it not shame thee to stand like a post,( leaving me) to find thee by myself?” (88). The metaphor of marriage runs throughout the poem and reaches the pinnacle of spirituality while traversing a physical path.

Ramana earnestly requests Arunachala to not to take the fruit shriveled and spoilt because it is worthless. He wants Him to take and enjoy it ripe. Here ripe fruit is the human soul ready to meet God when the awareness of sense organs and the mind are completely destroyed. It leads one to the stage of *sahaja nirvikalpa*. It is the natural and pure state of soul without concepts and attachments. The ‘ripe fruit’ refers to the realized self of man which does not reincarnate because it meets God and no more passes through the cycle of births and deaths. The Indians have a strong belief in a way of life where *Karam Bija* inevitably leads to *KaramPhala* and the body has to enter a different type of existence for its next birth. This further leads to another reincarnation on the Earth . Maharshi Ramana’s poetry talks of human beings bound by *karma*. Once he gets released from this vicious circle, he attains his resplendent self and shines as *Siva*, the Deity.

However, as we reach towards the end of the poem, the implied comparison of the metaphor of marriage becomes more explicit as Maharshi talks about the mind wedded to the world to be now wedded to perfection. The conceptual metaphor of marriage continues as Maharshi moves further from mind’s embrace upon the bed of tender flowers in the room of the body to Arunachala. The expression when expanded displays Maharshi’s brilliance at work in poetry. The mind wants to embrace God Arunachala in the room of body. The metaphor of marriage enters into the realm of spirituality where the soul seeks ultimate union with God. Finally the sought union of soul with God reaches a stage when they enjoy each other in the house of open space and there are no day and night.

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The union of marriage surpasses time and space. This could be an ideal example of the what George Lakoff says about the experiential basis of metaphor that the conceptual system underlying a language contains thousands of conceptual metaphors-conventional mappings from one domain to another, such as the Event Structure Metaphor. (Ortony : 240). The metaphor of marriage is embedded deep in Indian psyche, thought and experience and is treated sacred. It is from these conventional images that Maharshi steps into the domain of conceptual metaphors.

### **Metaphors Wrapped in Irony**

There are stanzas where metaphors are wrapped in irony. The simple expression in “Didst Thou not call me in?” (93) leads one into many interpretations; it could be an invitation unsolicited or could be an ironical statement. The invitation to the God’s home –the soul aspiring for union with him – should not remain uncalled for. He asks Arunachala like a person whom someone has invited home. There is a streak of personification as Arunachala – the hill is referred to as a living entity. The tone is obviously ironical. Irony takes place when the speaker says something intentionally at odds with the way he knows it to be. It is important to go through the whole expression to find a convergence of irony with metaphor “I have now come in. Now hard is thy lot, Oh Arunachala”. The ironic structure further deepens with “Does it become thee to sleep when I am outraged by others?” (84) The ‘others’ here are five senses. A deep and underlying conceptual metaphor of marriage is running concurrently but there are other metaphors which take an ironical shape. Predominantly it is the conceptual metaphor of marriage working with many other undercurrents of irony, simile and imagery.

Another noticeable thing about this particular poem is the use of compound words which when expanded work like metaphors. George A. Miller in *Images and models, similes and metaphors* talks about compound words and says that a greater variety of relational predicates must be inferred from them (Ortony: 400). Maharshi uses a compound word in “the strumpet mind will cease to walk the streets if only she find Thee. Disclose Thy beauty then and hold her bound, oh Arunachala!” (83)

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The mind is metaphorically referred to as “strumpet” – a female prostitute. ‘Strumpet’ is the vehicle for tenor ‘Mind’ which wanders in many directions with different thoughts arising. The similarity drawn between a prostitute wandering in streets and mind distracting in ego, attachments and senses is apparent. If the prostitute finds someone who can hold her permanently, her search will stop. In *Vivekachudamani*, a translation of Sankaracharya’s work, Maharshi himself explains that the self is like a man ‘swayed and dominated by lewd woman, of whom he is enamoured’ (The Collected Works: 245). The self as body also slips and enters into other things. Mind becomes quiet only after it finds its source as Arunachala – the God, and stays there. The use of compound word “strumpet mind” consisting of only two words-both nouns shows that one noun works as an adjective to another noun. What fascinates a reader most is how a metaphor can conceptualise in just two words. The contiguous words have their role in preparing the context however. There are examples of other phrases where they appear like epithets. “Hill of patience”, “Fiery gem” “Moon of grace” are such references.

### **Similes**

There remain many similes in the hymn to be discussed. Although simile and metaphor do not seem to differ much in their usage except that in simile, the use of ‘like’ and ‘as’ is what distinguishes it from metaphor. However, metaphors are favored more as compared to similes because the hearer discovers something new about topic when he uses metaphors. Metaphors stretch language beyond its elastic limit and offer the readers an opportunity to derive more meaning than simlie. In Ramana Maharshi, the similes are rather far and few. In a long poem of 108 stanzas, there are approximately 6 similes. The first simile used is that of a lodestone attracting iron. The force of attraction is the common underlying link in this case. The tenors and vehicles are different. One is explicit when the iron is attracted by lodestone. The other is implicit when God attracts soul. Another simile is that of a creeper. Human being is a weak creeper and wants the support of a strong tree ‘God’. Maharshi does not want to droop like a tender creeper without any support. He desires his steadfast support. Maharshi also talks about a ship losing his way in the storm because it is without helmsman. The man has lost his way on his destination to the God in this world. Maharshi makes a request to God to ignore his

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shortcomings through a simile of a mirror shown to a nose less man who becomes self-conscious after looking at his reflection. In another simile, he wants to dissolve in the God like snow melts in water. The implied comparison is again indicative of the union of soul with God. Maharshi compares himself to a spider entwined in his web. Man also seems to be caught in the web of the world. But contrary to popular belief expressed in Indian thought, the 'spider' here is Arunachala- the God and the 'web' is his grace. What strikes us as different is the positive meaning in the simile of spider and web which has often been used negatively.

### **Creative Use of Language**

What is particularly noticeable in this long poem by Maharshi is the constructive and creative use of language where metaphors do not appear merely extrinsic to the concepts of spiritual philosophy. They are intrinsic to the conceptualization and are neither frills nor ornaments. This makes the language more creative and metaphor becomes an essential characteristic of its creativity. The basic concept of Maharshi Ramana's spiritual philosophy is self-enquiry. One has to inquire within oneself the true nature of Self. It is neither body nor ego. This gets conceptualized in the form of one metaphor of marriage with various other metaphors relatively interspersed. As carrier of ideas, metaphors do add to the richness of meaning in Maharshi Ramana.

### **The Song of Poppadum**

The next poem "The Song of Poppadum" is an exquisite example of how ideas take shape of conceptual metaphors. It was composed in 1914-15 when Maharshi was living in Virupaksha cave where his mother did most of the cooking. One day she asked him to help in making *Poppadum*- a thin cake prepared from black gram flour. By giving instructions to his mother under the pretext of making *poppadum*, Maharshi asked his mother to experience the truth of Being-Awareness-Bliss.

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Metaphor of comparing this purely physical exercise related with cooking to a pure bliss of *Brahman* in its infinite silence runs throughout the poem. Cooking *poppadum* is wholly a metaphorical concept in this poem. There could be no better example of conceptual metaphor than “The Song of Poppadum”.

Black gram is ego, quern is the quest for wisdom, juice of tamarind is holy company, cumin is control of mind, pepper is self-restraint and salt is non-attachment. After grinding all of these in the mortar of Heart and grinding with pestle of mind, one needs to pound with ‘I’ and roll it with a pin of stillness. The frying is to be done in the ghee of ‘*Brahman*’ in the pan of infinite silence. Whatever comes out is the abiding *poppadum* of Self -true and imperishable.

### **Interaction View of Metaphor**

Max Black talks about two types of subjects and defends his interaction view of metaphor in “More about Metaphor” by saying:

The secondary or subsidiary subject is a system rather than an individual thing. The metaphorical utterance works by projecting upon the primary subject. The maker of a metaphorical subject selects, emphasizes, suppresses and organizes features of the primary subject. The two subjects interact either by inciting the hearer to select some of the secondary subject’s properties, or inviting him to construct a parallel implication or inducing him to make parallel changes in secondary subject (Ortony: 27).

Thus the two subjects in metaphor in Maharshi Ramana can be described in one of the above cited ways and the duality of reference can be marked by ‘focus’ and ‘frame’. “The Song of Poppadum” is an exquisite example of interaction view of metaphor as can be seen by applying the features of realized Self to the principal subject of cooking. Here the realized Self is focus and cooking a frame. The True Self after realization is a system rather than an individual thing. When cooking and realizing self interact, the result is remarkable in the form of the indestructible, blissful and ever-abiding Self-a Godly Self.

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The poem thus gives an idea how metaphorical expressions germinate from metaphorical concepts and structure the daily activities of man. The *jnana* and *bhakti marga* are not merely abstract spiritual pursuits of life achievable only in the other world; they are practically possible and attainable in this world while living and doing the mundane activities of day-to-day life. *Bhakti marga* is not separate from *Karma marga*, it is innate-very much there in the life we live. Maharshi never asked any of his disciples to leave everything and go away into a forest forlorn. He asked everyone to pursue the path of self-knowledge while living among the people. It is from this life lived within oneself that one dives and brings out the pearl of Self- pure, abiding and resplendent.

### **Philosophy and Poetry**

The Hindu philosophy recognizes the existence of subtler bodies of human being. These are material, subtle and causal. The five sheaths mentioned in the poem- physical, mental, vital, and intellectual and the blissful- all work in the subtle bodies of man. “Take- the black-gram, ego-self,/Growing in the five-fold body-field”, he says( 33). The use of compound words is particularly noticeable in this poem also as they again become metaphors when expanded. “ Ego-self ”, Heart-mortar ”, “mind-pestle”and “ body-field” are a few such expressions. Ego-self is black gram and is raw ingredient from which poppadum of realized Self will be prepared. Body consists of five senses and is a field where black gram of ego grows. Cumin seed of mind control needs to be added. After frying over fire of knowledge, ‘I’ is transmuted into abiding self. This is the real recipe of preparing Self. Metaphors have conceptualized in Maharshi’s poetry in the form of linguistic expressions because he has experienced them as he experienced the cooking.

Maharshi conceptualized metaphors in his poetry in such a way that they became an expression of his philosophy. The philosophy of Maharshi Ramana starts with a question “Who am I?” and ends with the realization of Self. Both are ‘I’- one ‘I’ is in bondage, the other is liberated. The bondage and liberation are mere linguistic terms and work in accordance with some basic thing of which they are the modifications. The state of pure being which is common to all and which is always experienced directly by everybody in one’s true nature is self-realization. In

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“Vivekachudamani”, he posits that consciousness of ‘I’ is the unbroken single essence of both **Isvara** and individual. It is the Brahman in ‘I’ the Self which one experiences and finally recognizes as Self-effulgent (208-269). All poetry written by Maharshi is directed towards the realization of this idea which gets conceptualized in the form of different metaphors. A few of them have been enumerated above in the discussion of two poems. The two poems selected for this discussion delineate two basic metaphors conceptualized in Maharshi Ramana’s poetry-the metaphor of marriage in “The Marital Garland of Letters” and the metaphor of cooking in “The Song of Poppadum”.

### **The Process of Convergence**

The two metaphors work and get conceptualized in the respective poems not individually but converge with similes, imagery and irony. One can discern a pattern in the metaphors in the above discussed poems. In “The Marital Garland of Letters”, the main metaphor gets conceptualized in marriage which is considered a sacred union of souls according to Indian thought and psyche. There are other metaphors which serve two purposes, either they are helpful in creating context in which the metaphor of marriage becomes explicitly clear or create a variety and break the monotony of a single metaphor. The similes, irony and imagery also assist in the same way.

Similarly the metaphor of cooking runs throughout “The Song of Poppadum”. Woven around a single metaphor, this small poem is light-hearted. This helps to make the spiritual philosophy of Maharshi Ramana uncomplicated, straightforward and interesting rather than grave and solemn. The first poem is long, profound, intense and explicitly metaphorical, the second is small, deep, witty, humorous and implicitly metaphorical. To conclude, we can say that the metaphors in the given poems pervade in the way we think. They are beyond senses and are embedded in the human psyche. They are vital because they unfold the mysteries of ‘I’ the ego into ‘I’ the Self. They cry the truth of man and the thunderous silence of God (Osborne. 2000: 454). It is between these two ends that Maharshi’s metaphors get conceptualized.

### **Part of Sadhana**

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Metaphors in Maharshi Ramana are deeply entrenched in his mode of sensibility and are directed both by *Karma Marga* and *Jnana Marga* - the path of action and the path of knowledge. These assumptions become conceptualized in his poetry. His spiritual philosophy is not merely a way of meditation but can also be applied in the day to day events of life. The metaphors in his poetry come from daily happenings of life which are not an obstacle to *Sadhna* but a way of *Sadhna*. Some of the metaphors recur in his poems while others occur infrequently, however together they weave the fabric of thought dotted with similes, imagery, irony and metonymy. Maharshi's poetry is full of metaphors which have their origin in a world beyond senses and are embedded deep into his consciousness. However these metaphors are not divorced from the realities of life. Thus conceptualized, they convey a philosophy of spiritual life unpretentiously which otherwise would be abstract and difficult to follow.

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