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THE GOD IDEA  
OF  
AMOS AND ISAIAH

by  
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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the requirements for  
the Degree of

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THE GOD IDEA  
OF  
AMOS AND ISAIAH

\* TABLE OF CONTENTS \*

|                                |    |
|--------------------------------|----|
| Introduction.....              | 1  |
| God - The Spiritual Being..... | 3  |
| The Argument.....              | 7  |
| Deity and Deed.....            | 9  |
| God's Demands.....             | 11 |
| Cause and Effect.....          | 13 |
| Order in the Universe.....     | 15 |
| God the Guarantor.....         | 16 |
| Moral Law - A Machine?.....    | 21 |
| Communal Responsibility.....   | 23 |
| Conclusion.....                | 25 |
| Notes.....                     | 27 |
| Bibliography.....              | 34 |

## INTRODUCTION

Neither the Bible nor the prophetic writings, in particular, are examples of systematic theologies or dogmatics. No lucid, well-ordered doctrine concerning God can be found on their pages. However, if theology is "Human judgements of God and the godly life,"<sup>(1)</sup> then surely the Bible is that testament to the God who revealed Himself through His acts and through man's perception of God's nature.

Amos and proto-Isaiah<sup>(2)</sup> were then theologians in that respect. Both were men who became aware of God and who formed judgements concerning His nature and what the implications of that nature meant to men. Their writings cannot be considered a catalogue of doctrines, but within them the prophets presented a clearly formulated and logically developed God-idea. It is the intention of the writer to offer that God-idea as one inherently present in the books of Amos and Isaiah, two God-thrilled men whose beings, words and actions all revealed His glorious purposes.

In anticipation of what follows, these suppositions must be stated. All that is extant in the Bible of Amos and Isaiah is not originally the words of these prophets. Through the critical approach of two scholars that which is thought to be genuine to the prophets has been elevated to consideration as original. The texts used as the "books" of Amos and Isaiah are those contained in two works:

"The Address of Amos" by Julian Morgenstern, and "Introduction and Critical Notes to the Portions of Isaiah 1-39 Read in Class" by Sheldon H. Blank. Both are mimeographed works in use at the Hebrew Union College.

Amos and Isaiah were alike in their visions, similar in thought-patterns and related in their idea of God. They are presented as one in this paper, except where a divergence of opinion or extension of belief may be indicated.

## GOD - THE SPIRITUAL BEING

Amos and Isaiah spoke to a people who had a God-idea and who acted in accord with what the nature of that God demanded of them. Bursting forth on the stage of history at a time when God had already been accepted as the God of Israel, when techniques of worshipping Him were refined and familiar, the two cast aside time-honored notions to thunder forth a new concept of reality. With caustic utterances, biting phrases and penetrating insight, the prophets declared that God was not what the people thought Him to be. With a knowledge derived from intense personal experience, observation of man and his actions, and tempered by an awareness of a reality in and apart from the universe, Amos and Isaiah categorically announced the nature of God.

God is not man; He is spirit and not flesh.<sup>(3)</sup> As such, God is supremely eminent. The stuff of what God is is not material - he cannot be carried as can Sakkuṯ and Kaiwan.<sup>(4)</sup> God cannot be fashioned by man.<sup>(5)</sup> He is utterly unlike all gods worshipped by men<sup>(6)</sup> for He alone is to be exalted.<sup>(7)</sup>

God is a spirit-being with a personality. He can be approached by man<sup>(8)</sup> and he seeks out relationships with man.<sup>(9)</sup> God's personality runs the whole gamut of human-like emotions and attributes. However, in view of God being spirit and not flesh, these emotions and attributes must be understood as descriptions applied to Him by earthy creatures

who seek to approximate God's nature in words.

God sees, (10) hears, (11) speaks, (12) inhales, (13) and touches, (14) for He has eyes, (15) a mouth, (16) hands. (17) Yet, for all this, He cannot be pictured in a specific form or contour - spirit is intangible. God's emotions are similar to those of man. He is capable of overwhelming love and affection, (18) hate, (19) joy. (20) As a being invested with passion and feeling, He voices indignation (21) and expresses His wrath (22) in no uncertain terms: "I hate, I spurn your feasts" (23) "Fasting and festal gathering and your appointed feasts, my soul hateth." (24) Vividly does He reproach, (25) His taunting (26) is picturesque. God can be provoked, (27) He suffers anguish (28) because of rejection by man. (29) "I am weary to bear them" (30) is the pitiful cry of a God who is sated (31) with the actions of men. Disappointment (32) is an aspect of God's personality, for He is a demanding (33) God. When His purposes are thwarted, He seeks vengeance (34) as an expression of His dissatisfaction. (34) Men hide "from before the dread presence of the Lord" (35) who causes fear and dread (36) and terrifies the peoples. (37)

*Note the verb.*

Although God can be perceived as "clear heat in sunshine, like a cloud of dew in the heat of the harvest," (38) He is not a quiescent, still being. Although men derive strength from their relationship to God by remaining inactive, (39) God is active. He is like "waters...that go softly." (40) He moves and is a "doer". His activities are manifold, for God is Omnipotent. He manifests Himself in the movements

of nations, peoples and in nature, but He is not a personification of either.

*note to page*

As a doer, God makes and fashions. (41) He eases Himself of His adversaries, (42) breaks down walls. (43) By the strength of His hand (44) He reveals Himself, and can cause a tottering (45) similar to the movement of an over-laden wagon. He is Omnipotent; He alone has power over all peoples. Not only Israel (46) but all nations, cities and persons are subject to His design: <sup>= Syria</sup> Damascus; (47) Gaza; (48) <sup>= Philistia</sup> Ashdod and Askelon; (49) Moab; (50) Ammon; (51) Philistia and Syria; (52) Calneh and Hamath. (53) He is the "World-God" (54) who directs the movements and actions of any people. (55) Assyria executes His decree, (56) Syrians and Philistines are spurred on by Him. (57)

*similar*

Nature is a manifestation of God's activity. He can send a fire, (58) cause a storm, (59) make the sun to set. (60) He is the force behind the clouds and the rain; (61) hail; (62) rivers; (63) thunder, earthquake, whirlwind and tempest. (64) God is the force behind nature not for mere caprice but for the demonstration of His purposes. Nature is God's middle-man, testifying to His design and desires:

*note re text*

"And yet, it was I that gave you  
Cleanness of teeth in all your cities,  
And lack of bread in all your places;  
But you did not return to me, Saith the Lord.  
It was I that withheld from you the rain,  
And I sent rain on one city  
But upon another I sent no rain.  
But you did not return to me, Saith the Lord.  
I smote you with blight and mildew;  
I laid waste your gardens and your vineyards;  
And your fig trees and olive trees the locust devoured.

But you did not return to me, Saith the Lord.  
 I sent a pestilence among you  
 after the manner of Egypt;  
 I slew your young men with the sword,  
 And I brought up the stench of your camp  
 into your nostrils.  
 But you did not return to me, Saith the Lord." (65)

*note re first*

The World-God is not only supremely powerful, He is Omnipresent. God transcends the limit of land and people. He can "lift an ensign to a nation<sup>\*</sup> from afar and will hiss for him from the end of the earth." (66) His signs are evident<sup>\*</sup>, as deep as Sheol or mounting high above. (67) God is everywhere, for "that which fills the earth is His glory." (68) All-powerful, all-pervading, all-knowing is the God of Amos and Isaiah. He is wise (69) but not in man's sense. God knows all the counsels and works of men; (70) His knowledge is unlimited.

*note*

*Interpretation?*

God is unique, alone.<sup>?</sup> There are none besides Him or like Him.<sup>?</sup> He is Holy, unlike those whom men call holy. (71) He alone is to be exalted. (72) He is the agent who can move what men call gods. (73) God is unique<sup>?</sup> because His nature is singular. (74)<sup>?</sup>

*ref. to*

*note re first*

*? or note re first*

## THE ARGUMENT

The tremendous impact of Amos and Isaiah is further evident in their analysis of the God-man relationship. Time-honored notions, familiar and satisfying actions were swept away by the mighty stream of their challenges to a complacent generation. It is the writer's opinion that contained within the utterances of the two prophets is a presentation of a God-idea which subscribes to the following development:

1. Man acts in accord with the nature of the God he professes.
2. The actions of those who know God's true nature differ from the actions of those who do not.
3. All actions have appropriate results, indicating
4. Moral Order in the universe.
5. Since God is omnipotent, He is the guarantor of the moral integrity of the universe.
  - a. Though He has a special relationship with Israel,
  - b. Israel has no claim on His favor.
  - c. A moral God can play no favorites; morality is universally applicable.
  - d. A moral God cannot be bribed.
6. The moral law is not inexorable, for man can avert the consequences of his actions through
  - a. his faculty to distinguish good from evil

b. Repentance

c. Reliance upon God.

7. Morality is a communal responsibility.

## DEITY AND DEED

God is revealed not only in the workings of nature and the movements of people on the stage of history but, particularly, through the actions and attitudes of men. They testify to the character of the god they profess by virtue of what they believe is expected of them. Their god-idea motivates their response to him and their relationship to their kind. Amos and Isaiah realized that the people believed they were acting in accordance with the nature of their god. What the two did so critically and devastatingly was to proclaim that God was a being other than the popular characterization of Him, that, in effect, the actions of men denied Him, His reality and His nature. Isaiah, as God's interpreter and spokesman, cried out:

"Woe, oh sinful nation, a people laden  
with iniquity;  
A seed of evildoers, children who deal  
corruptly;  
Who have forsaken the Lord, and despised  
the Holy One of Israel.  
They have turned away backward." (75)

Those who practice iniquity and deal corruptly have turned away from the God of Isaiah; they have rejected Him. Their actions are in accord with the god-idea they profess. To them, their god permits such devious practices. Isaiah again makes his claim by saying:

"And when you spread forth your hands,  
I will hide my eyes from you;  
Yea, though you make many prayers,  
I will not hear.  
Your hands are full of blood." (76)

Those who engage in bloodshed do so because the god in whom they believe permits such actions; his nature is not contrary to their acts. Men who accumulate wealth and material treasures do so because of the nature of their gods:

"For he has forsaken his people,  
The house of Jacob;  
Because they are filled with merchants  
from the east,  
They strike bargains with strangers.  
Their land is filled with silver,  
Neither is there any end to their treasures;  
Their land is filled with horses,  
Neither is there any end to their chariots.  
Their land is filled with idols;  
They worship the work of their hands,  
That which their fingers have made." (77)

*note re text*

Isaiah presents a graphic picture of his thesis. Men accumulate material treasures when they worship idols, the work of men's hands. Approbation is given to the overflowing houses of treasures by idols whose natures are not in conflict with the value ascribed to material goods.

Amos, too, states that man's idea of God is made manifest in his actions. He avers that those who oppress the needy do so because, in reality, they swear by idols:

"Hear this, you who trample upon the needy,  
You who grind the poor to the ground, saying,  
When will the new moon pass  
That we may sell grain;  
And the Sabbath  
That we may offer wheat for sale.  
Making the ephah small and the price great;  
And falsifying the scales,  
You who swear by Ashimah of Samaria,  
And say, 'As Gad lives, and as Dod lives.'" (78)

*note re text*

Those who swear by idols engage in certain practices. They act in one way because they believe they are realizing the nature of their gods through their actions. Different acts of men would indicate differing ideas of the natures of their deities.

## G O D ' S   D E M A N D S

Amos and Isaiah make clear-cut distinctions between the deeds of men who know the real nature of God and the deeds of those who do not. The former "let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like a perennial stream."<sup>(79)</sup> They "restrain the oppressor, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow."<sup>(80)</sup> They have faith in God<sup>(81)</sup> and fear Him.<sup>(82)</sup>

A more extensive enumeration of how the true nature of God is made manifest in man's actions can be offered by surveying the acts of those who do not know God. The reverse of their deeds would indicate true knowledge of Him. Amos and Isaiah were neither hesitant nor vague in their descriptions and denunciations of what they considered to be sins - acts contrary to the nature of God. Oppression was rampant in their societies and it took many guises. Selling the innocent for silver and the needy for sandals;<sup>(83)</sup> thrusting aside the humble;<sup>(84)</sup> retaining garments taken in pledge;<sup>(85)</sup> falsifying weights;<sup>(86)</sup> over-accumulation of wealth;<sup>(87)</sup> accepting bribes;<sup>(88)</sup> murder;<sup>(89)</sup> and the oppression of orphans and widows<sup>(90)</sup> - all these were practised by those who did not know how to do right.<sup>(91)</sup> Not only were these social sins indicative of a lack of knowledge of God; other actions and attitudes of mind were

equally demonstrative. Drunkenness;<sup>(92)</sup> over-weening pride;<sup>(93)</sup> scoffing;<sup>(94)</sup> telling falsehoods;<sup>(95)</sup> self-glorification;<sup>(96)</sup> self-satisfaction;<sup>(97)</sup> valuing of material goods;<sup>(98)</sup> faith in human aid;<sup>(99)</sup> and outright rejection of God<sup>(100)</sup> were signs of those who did not know God's nature. In his consecration vision, Isaiah became aware of this principle. When he beheld God, when he recognized His nature, Isaiah comprehended why he himself was unclean and opened his eyes to behold the unclean actions of his people.<sup>(101)</sup>

## CAUSE AND EFFECT

The prophets developed the thesis that actions beget corresponding results. This causal relationship between actions and the effects thereof is underscored in:

"If you consent to obey,  
You will eat the good of the land.  
But if you refuse and rebel,  
You shall be devoured." (102)

This represents a typical proposition of appropriate results for particular actions. Those whose actions are contrary to the nature of God suffer death,<sup>(103)</sup> desolation,<sup>(104)</sup> reduction of crops,<sup>(105)</sup> exile,<sup>(106)</sup> hunger,<sup>(107)</sup> and shame.<sup>(108)</sup> Amos expresses this syllogism in many applications:

"For the three transgressions of Gaza,  
And for the four, I will not allow  
them to repent.  
Because they carried into exile a  
whole people  
To hand them over to Edom.  
So I will send a fire upon the wall  
of Gaza,  
And it shall devour her palaces;  
And I will cut off the inhabitants  
from Ashdod,  
And the holder of the scepter from  
Ashkelon;  
And I will turn my hand against Ekron,  
And the princes of the Philistines  
shall perish -  
Saith the Lord." (109)

A discerning observation is made by the prophets, in that those who reject God thereby make themselves more impervious to knowing Him. To those who refused to recognize the authenticity of Isaiah's message the question is raised:

*style  
interp.?*

"To whom would he impart knowledge,  
To whom explain the message?" (110)

Not to you rejectors, surely, for the "Lord hath poured  
upon you a spirit of deep slumber, He has tightly closed  
your eyes, and has muffled your heads; so that the revela-  
tion of all these things has become to you like the words  
of a scroll that is sealed, which if one hand to a scholar  
with the request, Pray read this, he will say, I cannot,  
for it is sealed." (111)

## ORDER IN THE UNIVERSE

This obvious cause and effect relationship indicates that there is order operating in the universe. Isaiah asks:

"If your sins be like scarlet,  
Can they become white as snow?  
If they be red like crimson,  
Can they become as wool?" (112)

This is as fantastic as:

"Shall the axe boast over the man  
that hews with it,  
Or a saw lord itself over the man  
that plies it?  
As though a rod were to sway the  
man that wields it,  
Or a staff were to lift up (him  
that is) not wood?" (113)

Even the confusion of moral distinctions is as ludicrous as calling light darkness!:

"Woe unto them who call evil good,  
And good evil;  
Who count darkness as light,  
And light as darkness;  
Who count bitter as sweet,  
And sweet as bitter!" (114)

Amos poses the same proposition in a riddle:

"Can horses run upon rocks?  
Or can the sea be plowed by oxen?  
That you should turn justice into  
poison  
And the fruit of righteousness  
into wormwood?" (115)

*note on left*

The natural world exhibits a design. Men cannot by mere desire, statement or act alter the order in the natural world. It is just as fantastic to expect the moral order to change because of the desire or acts of men.

## G O D    T H E    G U A R A N T O R

Since the natural world is a manifestation of God's design, and that world evidences order, God must be the guarantor of the moral integrity of the universe. "God is moral" is the unique contribution of Amos and Isaiah. That recognition has a special significance for Israel. The moral God is the same God who "exalted and favored children."<sup>(116)</sup> He brought Israel from Egypt<sup>(117)</sup> and declared: "No one but you have I chosen to have a special relationship."<sup>(118)</sup> It is not outside the ken of God to enjoy a particular rapport with one nation. However, this relationship, of necessity, must conform to God's nature which is moral; no deviation from it is possible.

Therefore Israel has no claim on God's favor when its actions are contrary to His true nature. In a tender description of this special relationship, Israel pictures God as the lover of Israel, Israel responding immorally, and the necessary consequences of such immorality:

"Let me sing for my Loved One  
My love song of his vineyard.

My Loved One had a vineyard  
On a fertile hill;  
He dug it, and cleared it of stones,  
And planted it with choice vines;  
He built a watchtower in the midst  
of it,  
And hewed out a winevat;  
And he expected it to yield grapes,  
But it yielded wild grapes.

Now, O citizens of Jerusalem, and  
men of Judah.  
Judge, I pray, between me and my  
vineyard!  
What more could have been done for  
my vineyard  
Than that which I have done for it?  
Why, then, when I expected it to  
yield grapes,  
Did it yield wild grapes?

So now, I pray, let me tell you  
What I will do to my vineyard;  
I will remove its hedge, so that it  
shall be ravaged;  
I will break down its walls, so that  
it shall be trampled down;  
I will make an end of it, unpruned  
and unhoed,  
It will spring up with briers and  
thorns;  
And the clouds will I command  
That they rain no rain upon it.

*note one detail*

For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts  
is the house of Israel,  
And the men of Judah are his cherished  
plantation;  
He looked for justice, but lo! bloodshed,  
For righteousness, but lo! a cry." (119)

Amos says in the same verse where he describes the  
selection of Israel: "Therefore will I punish you for all  
your wrongdoing." (120) In spite of the special relation-  
ship, there are no immoral favors for Israel. If Jacob is  
proud, then it must pay the price. (121) If Israel oppresses  
the poor and needy, an act of immorality, then it is no bet-  
ter than Calneh and Hamath (122) and must suffer the same  
consequences. God has made no immutable agreement with  
Israel, for "are you not like the Ethiopians to me?" (123)

God's morality is universally applicable. Though Assyria  
is not like Israel to Him, the pride of Assyria must be pun-  
ished. (124) Damascus will be as forsaken as Israel because

the two have joined in defiance of God.<sup>(125)</sup> Egypt and Israel will stumble and fall together, the helper and the holpen.<sup>(126)</sup> God's ethical concern extends over Damascus, Moab, Ammon and Gaza.<sup>(127)</sup> If these nations, which enjoy no special relationship to God, must conform to His moral law, how much the more Israel who is His vineyard?

The relationship of God and Israel is one of mutual obligation - a moral relationship. Just as Ahaz must have faith<sup>(128)</sup> so is Israel expected to rely upon God. Rebellious children who form projects not of God's spirit<sup>(129)</sup> are violating their obligations and must endure the penalties.<sup>(130)</sup> Israel receives from God just recompense in keeping with her actions:

"Therefore, because you did this to me  
Thus will I do to you, O Israel." (131)

*note on Sept*

God and Israel were not newly known to one another. He was her history; He revealed Himself through her. Israel had recognized God by a well-developed system of religious observances, rituals, sacrifices and sanctuaries. Had she truly recognized Him? Were these signs of avowal in consonance with a moral God? The most vehement pronouncements of the prophets were directed against the sacrificial system:

"When you come to see my face,  
Who hath required this at your hand  
To trample my courts?  
Bring no more an oblation of vanity,  
It is an incense of abomination to me;  
I cannot endure new moons and Sabbath,  
The calling of assemblies.  
\* Fasting and festal gathering and your  
appointed feasts  
My soul hateth.

*note on Sept*

They are a trouble unto me;  
I am weary to bear them.  
And when you spread forth your hands,  
I will hide my eyes from you;  
Yea, when you make many prayers,  
I will not hear;  
Your hands are full of blood." (132)

"Because this people draw near me  
with their mouth,  
And honor me with their lips,  
While their thoughts are far from me,  
And their 'motions of ritual'  
Are an injunction of men,  
That is learned by rote,  
Therefore, behold, I will once more  
deal with this people  
In a wonderful way,  
In a wonderful and wondrous way,  
And the wisdom of their wise men  
shall perish,  
And the understanding of their  
prudent men shall hide itself." (133)

"I hate, I spurn your feasts  
And your meal offerings,  
I will not accept them;  
And the thank offerings of your  
fatted beasts  
I will not look upon.  
Take away from me the noise of your  
songs,  
And to the melody of your lyres I will  
not listen.  
But let justice roll down like waters,  
And righteousness like a perennial stream." (134)

*write on people*

In the face of these multitudinous advances to Him, God declares that the sanctuaries of Israel shall be ruined, (135) that "Gilgal shall go unto everlasting captivity and Bethel shall become a delusion." (136) The reason for God's irrevocable rejection of ritual (137) was the same as his reaction to corrupt social practices - that which denies God's essence is ungodly, immoral. Rituals are considered as immoral as the acceptance of bribes by judges. They are in the nature

of a bribe and contain within themselves the seeds of corruption.

Sanctuary worship and all its appurtenances leads men to transgressions. The new moons and the Sabbath are no deterrents to unethical conduct.<sup>(138)</sup> In a mocking tone, God invites the people to:

"Come to Bethel and transgress!  
To Gilgal, and multiply your transgressions!,  
And bring your sacrifices of cattle  
And your peace offering of he-goats.  
Burn a thank-offering of leavened bread  
And proclaim voluntary offerings;  
Publish them!  
For so you love to do, O Israelites,  
Saith the Lord." (139)

*note on text*

The implication evident in these verses is that sanctuary worship and sacrifice lead but to transgressions, they do not serve as a means of true service to God. Israel glorifies itself, not God, in proclaiming offerings. God does not desire the delusions of the sacrificial cult but the search after Him to learn how to do right, once the right is known.

## MORAL LAW - A MACHINE?

The preceding characterization of the God-idea of Amos and Isaiah would be eminently unjust without the addition of a basic element. God is no mere inexorable mechanism who rules the world and men by an inflexible law. Although the principle of causality is inherent, it does not mean that man is powerless to avert the consequences of his actions. In the scheme of thinking of the prophets, free will plays an important role. Man is equipped with the capacity to distinguish between good and evil. Thus, he may decide his future. He knows that immorality breeds destruction. He is aware that upright behavior, making his actions respond to God's character, is a guarantor of tranquility and a good life. However, the consequences of immorality can be averted by repentance, turning to God. Order still prevails, for turning to God indicates that man accepts His nature, complies with His demands and so sets into motion another series of results. Isaiah describes this process in his consecration vision:

"Make the heart of this people fat,  
And make their ears heavy  
And shut their eyes;  
Lest they see with their eyes,  
And hear with their ears,  
And understand with their heart,  
And repent and be healed." (140)

*only this  
remedial is  
indicated*

Man has the power to turn to God, to repent, to understand the nature of his folly and be healed - if he but chooses to.

His corrupt practices dull his ears and shut his eyes to God's truth. Sin leads to more sin - that is its nature. But for the man who desires to wrest himself from his corrupt state, to turn from his ways, repentance is his for the choosing. Isaiah declares that:

"In turning and in rest,  
You would have been saved,  
You would have found your strength  
In quietness and in confidence,  
But you would not." (141)

Trust in God is the secret of life. It is there for those who desire it. Amos reiterates man's capacity to choose his destiny by becoming aware of God's manifestations and turning to Him.<sup>(142)</sup> Those who place their reliance on God will be established<sup>(143)</sup> for they call only God holy.<sup>(144)</sup>

## COMMUNAL RESPONSIBILITY

To moderns who think in terms of "God helps those who help themselves," Amos and Isaiah have little meaning. The man who frees himself from his society through physical isolation or some thought process must seek justification elsewhere. The prevalent notion of attaining individual salvation by means of an act or confession is not present in their God-idea. The God of Amos and Isaiah spoke to peoples, communities.<sup>(145)</sup> His timeless words had application in their day; do they not now? God looked upon a "sinful kingdom." He then declared:

"I will destroy it from off the face  
of the ground.  
And I will shake the house of Israel  
from among the nations  
Just as one shakes the sieve.  
By the sword all the sinners of my people  
shall die." <sup>not over left</sup> (146)

The sinners were the rulers, the "distinguished as the chief of the nations," and those who were "like gods to the house of Israel."<sup>(147)</sup> The princes and the elders were those who spoiled the poor.<sup>(148)</sup> Social corruption was evident, however, from the palace down to the hovel. "For everyone is profane and an evildoer, and every mouth speaks folly."<sup>(149)</sup> The people were as corrupt as their leaders - all must be destroyed, though the ruling class would be the first to go into exile.<sup>(150)</sup>

In Isaiah's consecration vision, when he experienced the

nearness of God, he cried out:

"Woe is me for I am undone,  
Because I am a man of unclean lips  
And I dwell in the midst of a people  
Of unclean lips." (151)

He felt unclean as a member of an unclean people. His sin  
was expiated by the touch of coal to his lips:

"See this has touched your lips,  
So your guilt is removed,  
And your sin forgiven." (152)

This is the only occasion in the writings of both prophets  
where individual atonement is indicated, referring only to  
a chosen one of God, His spokesman. It must be concluded,  
then, that Amos and Isaiah were proponents of a way of life  
in which the individual was held personally responsible for  
his group. No man could enjoy luxury while another cried  
for bread. No man could expect justice for himself while  
others were mistreated. No man could dwell in ease and  
quiet while others were being distressed. The group and  
the person were one. Repentance was an act by the community;  
turning to God was a necessity for the group - else all  
persons perish, regardless of their individual worth. Amos  
and Isaiah seem to be speaking to mankind today, pointing  
the way to lasting peace and security.

## CONCLUSION

Amos and Isaiah were expositors of a God-idea. That idea was the yardstick by which all was measured. Nature and its varied moods, man and his activities, history and its meaning revealed the nature of God.

The message of the prophets concerned itself wholly with the development of their God-idea. It is relevant for us today. God is unique, singularly different from accepted notions of Him. He alone is God; no other deity can be likened to Him. God is a spirit-being. He is no abstraction, but manifests a definable personality - as much as man is capable of perceiving Him. God can be sought by man; He seeks out relationships with man. }

God is holy, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent. He transcends all limits but manifests Himself in the world. He can be discerned as the ruler of man and the universe, the Lord;<sup>(153)</sup> the judge of man's actions;<sup>(154)</sup> the teacher of conduct;<sup>(155)</sup> the spiritual father to man.<sup>(156)</sup> History reveals Him and His nature: God is the Holy One of Israel;<sup>(157)</sup> the Mighty One of Israel;<sup>(158)</sup> the Light of Israel;<sup>(159)</sup> the Rock of Refuge and the God of Salvation.<sup>(160)</sup>

The actions of man accord with the nature of the god he professes. The actions of those who know God's true nature differ from the actions of those who do not. A glance at the destinies of nations and peoples indicates that all

actions beget appropriate results. Causality is present not only in the natural world but also in the world of man - there is a moral order in the universe. The unique aspect of the God-idea of Amos and Isaiah is that God is moral. He is the guarantor of the moral integrity of the universe.

Though Israel has a special relationship to God, Israel can have no claim on special favors. The moral God cannot exercise favoritism nor can He be bribed by gifts of a sacrificial nature. Morality is universally applicable. However, the moral law is not inexorable; man can set into motion a new chain of cause and effect by exerting his capacity to distinguish good from evil and by acting in like manner. Repentance, turning to God, is within the grasp of any who seek reliance on God. The individual cannot find salvation outside his group; all men are responsible for the actions of one another. When the peoples and the nations of the world truly perceive the nature of God, respond to Him by making their actions conform to His character, only then will they be established.

## NOTES

1. Cohon, S. S., Theology and Religion, p. 21. Note that wherever the word God is capitalized in this essay, it refers to the God and the specific God-idea of Amos and Isaiah. Otherwise, lower case "god" indicates untrue conceptions of God.
2. Proto-Isaiah refers to the first Isaiah, hereinafter called Isaiah.
3. Isaiah 31.3.
4. Amos 5.26a.
5. Isaiah 2.8.
6. Isaiah 8.12f. ?
7. Isaiah 2.17.
8. Amos 5.4.
9. Isaiah 6.8.
10. Isaiah 1.15, cf. 18.4, Amos 5.22.
11. Isaiah 1.15.
12. Isaiah 1.20,24; cf. 6.8.
- ? 13. Isaiah 1.13.
- ? 14. Isaiah 5.26.
15. Isaiah 1.15, cf. 3.9, Amos 9.8a. ?
16. Isaiah 1.20
17. Isaiah 31.3, cf. 10.4b.
18. Isaiah 1.2, cf. 5.1.
19. Isaiah 1.4, cf. Amos 5.21. ?

20. Isaiah 1.11<sup>7</sup>, cf. 5.7, 9.16.
21. Isaiah 10.5.
22. Isaiah 10.4-6, cf. 9.11, 28.21.
23. Amos 5.12.
24. Isaiah 1.14.
25. Amos 5.12.
26. Isaiah 10.3.
27. Isaiah 3.8.
28. Isaiah 5.4.
29. Isaiah 5.1-7.
30. Isaiah 1.14.
31. Isaiah 1.11.
32. Isaiah 5.4.
33. Isaiah 1.12, 16f.
34. Isaiah 1.24.
35. Isaiah 2.10.
36. Isaiah 8.13.
37. Amos 8.9f., cf. Isaiah 28.21.
38. Isaiah 18.4.
39. Isaiah 7.4, cf. 30.15.
40. Isaiah 8.6.
41. Isaiah 22.11.
42. Isaiah 1.24.
43. Isaiah 5.5, cf. 28.21.
44. Isaiah 10.13.
45. Amos 2.13.
46. Amos 2.6.

47. Amos 1.3.
48. Amos 1.6.
49. Amos 1.8.
50. Amos 2.1.
51. Amos 1.13.
52. Amos 9.7, cf. Isaiah 20.6.
53. Amos 6.2.
54. Morgenstern, J., Amos Studies, p. 407.
55. Isaiah 28.2.
56. Isaiah 7.18,20; cf. 5.26, 10.5.
57. Isaiah 9.10f.
58. Amos 1.4, 7, 14a; 2.2.
59. Amos 1.14b.
60. Amos 8.9.
61. Isaiah 5.6.
62. Isaiah 28.17.
63. Isaiah 8.7.
64. Isaiah 29.6.
65. Amos 4. 6,7a,8b,9f.
66. Isaiah 5.26, 6.3, 10.3, 28.11, 31.6,8.
67. Isaiah 7.11.
68. Isaiah 6.3.
69. Isaiah 31.2.
70. Isaiah 29.15, cf. Amos 5.12.
71. Isaiah 8.12f.
72. Isaiah 2.17.
73. Amos 5.26a.
74. See pp. 16ff.

75. Isaiah 1.4.
76. Isaiah 1.15.
77. Isaiah 2.6-8.
78. Amos 8.4f, 14a.
79. Amos 5.24, cf. Isaiah 28.17.
80. Isaiah 1.17.
81. Isaiah 7.9.
82. Isaiah 8.13.
83. Amos 2.6, cf. Isaiah 10.2.
84. Amos 2.7a
85. Amos 2.8.
86. Amos 8.5.
87. Amos 5.11, cf. Isaiah 5.8.
88. Isaiah 1.23, cf. 5.23.
89. Isaiah 1.21.
90. Isaiah 10.2, cf. 1.23.
91. Amos 3.10a
92. Isaiah 5.11, 22; cf. 28.1.
93. Isaiah 2.11-17, cf. 9.8, 28.1, Amos 6.8.
94. Isaiah 28.14, 22; cf. 5.19.
95. Isaiah 28.15, cf. 30.9. *asayua*
96. Isaiah 2.8, cf. 9.9, 10.13, Amos 6.13.
97. Isaiah 5.21, cf. Amos 6.1.
98. Isaiah 2.6-8, cf. 5.11f, 22.13. *g*
99. Isaiah 20.6, cf. 30.2-5, 16; 31.1; 22.7-11, Amos 9.10. *ca*
100. Isaiah 5.12, 19, 24; cf. 3.8f, 8.6, 17.9-11, 28.15.
101. Isaiah 6.5.

102. Isaiah 1.19f.
103. Isaiah 1.20, cf. 22.14.
104. Isaiah 5.8, cf. 17.1-3, 10.3, Amos 5.11.
105. Isaiah 5.10.
106. Isaiah 5.13, cf. Amos 1.5, 8; 1.13-15; 6.7; 9.8.<sup>?</sup>
107. Isaiah 5.13.
108. Isaiah 30.5, cf. 2.11.
109. Amos 1.6-8, cf. 1.3-5, 13-15; 2.1-3; Isaiah 5.24; 10.1-3;  
22.12-14; 28.22; 29.13f.; 30.12f.; 30.16.
110. Isaiah 28.9, cf. 6.9f., 30.1.
111. Isaiah 29.10f.
112. Isaiah 1.18.
113. Isaiah 10.15.
114. Isaiah 5.20.
115. Amos 6.12.
116. Isaiah 1.2, cf. 28.16. *relevance?*
117. Amos 9.7.
118. Amos 3.2. Translation by Dr. N. Glueck.
119. Isaiah 5.1-7.
120. Amos 3.2; cf. Isaiah 29.3f.
121. Amos 6.8, cf. Isaiah 1.19f.
122. Amos 6.2.
123. Amos 9.7.
124. Isaiah 10.12.
125. Isaiah 17.1-3, cf. Amos 1.3.
126. Isaiah 31.3.
127. Amos 1.3, 2.1, 1.13, 1.6.

128. Isaiah 7.9.
129. Isaiah 30.1, cf. 29.15.
130. Isaiah 30.3.
131. Amos 4.12.
132. Isaiah 1.11-15.
133. Isaiah 29.13f.
134. Amos 5.21-24.
135. Amos 7.9.
136. Amos 5.5.
137. Blank, Sheldon H., Two Lectures On The Prophets, p. 15.
138. Amos 8.5.
139. Amos 4.4f.
140. Isaiah 6.10.
141. Isaiah 30.15.
142. Amos 4.6-12, 3.10a, cf. Isaiah 1.3, 19f.; 30.9-11, 16.
143. Isaiah 7.9, 4; 30.15; cf. Amos 5.4.
144. Isaiah 8.13, cf. 6.3, 1.4.
145. Isaiah 3.13-15, cf. 5.1-7; 6.5; 9.15f; Amos 9.8-10; 6.3f.
146. Amos 9.8a-10a.
147. Amos 6.1.
148. Isaiah 3.14, cf. 1.23, 9.15, Amos 4.1.
149. Isaiah 9.15f, cf. Amos 5.2.?
150. Amos 6.7, cf. 4.3.
151. Isaiah 6.5.
152. Isaiah 6.6. ? - relevance?
153. Isaiah 1.21, cf. 10.16.
154. Isaiah 3.13f.
155. Isaiah 1.10. 7?
156. Isaiah 1.2, cf. 5.1-17.
157. Isaiah 1.4, cf. 5.19, 30.12.
158. Isaiah 1.24.

159. Isaiah 10.1<sup>7</sup>.

160. Isaiah 17.10.

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A Digest  
of  
The God Idea of Amos and Isaiah  
by  
Murray Blackman

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