Conclusion

The Book of Isaiah, one of the longest of the biblical texts, narrates the story of judgement and salvation in well structured and meticulously employed literary devices. In fact, both the structure and the literary devices together have considerably enhanced the effectiveness of depiction of the too abstract and divine topics: judgement and salvation. Structurally speaking, Isaiah has 66 chapters as a master analogue of the Scripture which has the same number of books - 39 books for the Old Testament and 27 books for the New Testament. Thematically also it is divided into two parts of verse and prose: chapters 1-35 proclaim God's judgement and chapters 36-39 portray historical event, and chapters 40-66 promise God's salvation. From the linguistic viewpoint, Isaiah is marked with several stylistic features - imagery, simile, metaphor, symbolism besides figures of form, viz, colloquialism, rhetorical question, repetition, alliteration, euphemism, litotes, antithesis, climax, anticlimax etc, etc. These devices constitute its power and beauty. The thematic structure has a definite and well planned linguistic structure consisting of many kinds of stylistic devices which have often been observed in earlier studies but only casually. These stylistic features follow a general pattern which subsumes both the figures of meaning as well as those of form. For example, imagery is observed to appear in single, paired, and clustered
forms. The same pattern is noted in the simile, metaphor, symbolism, rhetorical question, etc. Another important fact worth noting is the subtle and varied way of handling all these innumerable literary devices throughout the text. An examination of the use of these devices in Isaiah is the subject matter of this research.

To begin with, chapter 1 focuses on an introduction of the Old Testament, the Prophets, *The Book of Isaiah* and its author. As we have seen in the structure of the Old Testament, the order and contents of Prophets in the Bible are found to vary according to the Hebrew Scriptures consisting of Former Prophets and Latter Prophets. The Greek version, viz, Septuagint, and the current English version show the frame of Major Prophets and Minor Prophets. The literary form of the prophets has been the subject of much debate – whether the identification of distinctive types of prophetic utterance might assist us in determining what a prophet actually said or not. It seems to be very helpful to identify the authors for some controversial works of authorship such *The Book of Isaiah*. However, a question arises that if a certain type of prophetic utterance is visualized, a prophet may not employ a conventional type – priestly oracle, hymn and parable – and he may change it with varying degrees of creativity and originality.

*The Book of Isaiah* is known as one of the most magnificent works in Hebrew literature.(International Bible Society 1985: 247)
It is called the Fifth Gospel or Isaiah Gospel, since its main content is prophecy of Christ who will be coming.

Harry Bultema in his book Commentary on Isaiah (p 5) has observes:

"He lets us hear the rumble of thunder, the roaring of the lion, the war cry of on-marching armies, the screaming of fugitives, the crackle of flames, the rattle of chariots, the clanging of armor, the roar of the seas, and the din of earthquakes."

Isaiah’s feeling and imagination are found well fused in his poetic talent producing the most powerful and soul-stirring songs in the great diversity of his poems: lyrical, elegiacal, and epical. Almost all the major poetic devices can be seen to be investing his poetic images – simile and metaphor, rhyme and alliteration, epigram and proverbs, rhetorical questions and exclamations, monologue and dialogue, antithesis and parallelism, synecdoche, symbol, hyperbole, parable, wordplay, irony, and sarcasm – all these are found in their most perfect form in Isaiah.

His range of vocabulary is observed to be richer than that of any other writer of the Scriptures – Ezekiel using only 1,535 words, Jeremiah 1,653, the Psalmist 2,170, while Isaiah has a lexicon of 2,186 words. (Bultema 1981: 6) His double, triple and sometimes quadruple usage of synonyms and semantic
repetitiveness is noted to bolster the substantial contents intrinsically.

The chapter concludes with a review of stylistics. Stylistics is known to have developed from rhetoric in the twentieth century after Bally published a two-volume treatise (Stylistique) on French stylistics (1909). It was strengthened by the work of Spitzer (1928, 1948) and others. Stylistics gradually spread across Europe and in 1960s it began to flourish in Britain and the United States. (Wales 1989: 437-438)

Stylistics is the study of style covering all the expressive aspects of language: phonology, prosody, morphology, syntax and lexicology. With the influences of linguistics and literary criticism, different stylistic approaches have developed.

Chapter 2 highlights the facts that the literary beauty of The Book of Isaiah is based mainly on imagery, one of the many dominant stylistic devices that apparently seem to lend some kind of unity to the whole text as a binding factor for the author through his images portrays his mental pictures of perceptual and conceptual objects.

The images are found on the whole to be mainly functional. Isaiah's purpose, it is quite apparent is not to simply convey the theme using images but to arouse a fountain of feelings in the readers' hearts. He makes the readers feel the beauty, the power, the misery, and the seriousness of judgment in profound and subtle way through an imagining of these.
emotions. His selection of images is very strict and persuasive and this power of persuasion of his discourse, it is further observed, depends substantially on images which are quite familiar to people and appropriate to situations and are prolonged to imprint a graphic and unerasable picture in the readers' minds.

Further, its images on the whole in the text are observed to stem from traditional sources, from the familiar and the deeply associated experience of everyday life of the then people's life. From this perspective, images used in the text do not seem to be inventive but traditional and casual. The table clearly shows, the fields from which imagery is drawn are limited and confined to the given spheres of life, namely, domestic life, farming, war or battle, the nature, parts of human body, musical instruments etc.

Many images, however, are hardly used in other Biblical texts. In other words, they are original though they may have been drawn from folk wisdom.

Further, Isaiah's imagery is noted to be clustered, coherent, extended and interlaced. Image clusters often indicate the presence of emotional or intellectual themes that are pivotal to the writers' intentions.

Despite the dominance of visual imagery, the text reveals an interplay of sight and sound, sight and smell, sight, sound and kinesthetic sense etc. which adds to the richness and variety of
imagery. It, moreover, also displays Isaiah's skilful way of using imagery in a subtle and fascinating manner.

The sources from which this imagery has been drawn are not very remote from everyday human experience; images on the whole are found revolving around human life whose existence is the crux of the text. The nature, animal, farming are an integral part of life which refers to man, woman, human body, society, religion, country, war, etc.

Simile, another hallmark of Isaiah's literary beauty, is observed and analysed in chapter 3; its simplicity and novelty and freshness has often enamored the connoisseurs of its literary beauty. Isaiah's store of similes also is enormous; it is quite dense (from the statistical point of view) all over the text. The simile is observed to be used in a variety of ways, skilfully and dexterously. His simile is neither Miltonic nor Spencerian, it is both and yet different as well. In other words, Isaiah is rife with both types. Besides, he exploits his own kinds of simile.

Isaiah's meticulous and varied craftsmanship is noted even at the deeper level that is at the level of syntax. Like many masters of literature, he has used a varied syntax to dodge monotony; both hackneyed as well as the most original and abnormal syntax are found in the text. And the very syntax is observed adding and enhancing the freshness of a simile. Syntactical arrangements of the paired and clustered similes are found to be different.
That through simile, an author can arouse human recognition is evident in this chapter. Besides this, Isaiah seems to have created realistic pictures to evoke the readers' feeling through similes taken from real life—so it has an immediacy of appeal. Further, the readers are not taken away, perhaps because the similes are not alien but are actually near to life.

Isaiah the Prophet being a staunch believer in God's ultimate judgement and salvation had been a man buried deep in thought about suffering humanity all the time. His thoughts, therefore, are found not blurred and inconsistent but, in fact, as clear as hordes of pictures arranged properly in a photo album. Not only hordes of images but also hordes of similes are found perhaps on account of his deep fascination and preoccupation with vivifying thought couched in concrete images.

The range of similes, it is observed, is very vast. As we have noted, images are the building blocks of similes. Each of the images is found to appear at best once in the form of a simile though it recurs many times in the form of an image in the text.

The metaphors follow the type and use similes and this is described in chapter 4; a minute study has revealed a close nexus between the two yet each has some singular features of its own. Like the simile, most of the metaphors are noted to have been drawn from the repertoire of imagery. Further, like the simile, in the case of metaphors as well new images are
found showing an ever expanding canvass of Isaiah's imagery. In their pattern just like simile, the metaphors are also found appearing 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 be metaphors; they enter into the domain of symbolism. In other words, they become symbols deepening the meaning and burying the readers/listeners in mystifying divine thought. Thirdly, while examining the metaphors from the perspective of presence or absence of vehicle and tenor both simple and concealed metaphors are observed in the text. Simple metaphor, the case in which a metaphor is directly expressed, is observed to be more frequent -- this stylistic feature perhaps helps in grasping the message easily yet profoundly. The concealed metaphors, that is the metaphors without tenor, however, are remarkably communicating and far from being vague.

Symbolism, another important dimension of Isaiah's literary beauty, is analysed in the same chapter. The text is seen to abound in all types of symbolism and the symbols are observed to be contributing to the text in two ways: first, rescuing the text from the monotony yielded on account of the employment of just one type of symbolism; secondly, helping the author to communicate abstract ontological and divine matters in a concrete and vivifying and novel fashion. Further, the text is found to be replete with public/global, private/local and
transcendental symbolism all of which are dealt with at great length in this chapter itself. The chapter has examined symbolism from two perspectives: 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 the number of symbols that appear together, viz, single, paired, clustered etc.

Finally, symbolism too, is remarkably seen to be adding and augmenting the freshness of images in Isaiah's private symbols in the various parts of the text. Public symbols as the name suggest are those symbols whose meaning is evident to almost everyone; such symbols are a part and parcel of everyday language. Besides the private symbols through which he generates and emphasizes his viewpoint, Isaiah is found to be using public symbols as well quite frequently in the text.

Finally, chapter five examines how Isaiah handles the figures of form; it further, gives an insight into Isaiah's literary skill.

The chapter focuses on rhetorical question, quotation, repetition / alliteration, rhythm, euphemism, litotes, antithesis, climax / anticlimax, symplece, anaphora, epistrophe etc. All these figures are found adding and expanding Isaiah's stylistic canvas imparting it a literary beauty par excellence in the whole range of literature.

The text, it is observed, abounds in innumerable instances of colloquialism. A remarkably plain and relaxed style that Isaiah
has subtly and successfully exploited in order to bring home to his readers the profound divine message is noteworthy.

Further, Isaiah is noted to have not only a fascination for rhetorical questions but also skill to handle it in many ways. Surprisingly, the main three categories--single, paired and clustered--are to be found in the case of rhetorical questions as well. Thus, the underlying pattern of his discourse or the way of handling figures of meaning extends to this figure of form as well.

Isaiah is observed to have a natural flair for quotations which appear from beginning to the end in the text imparting a dramatic impact to his vision of judgement and punishment and salvation of the Israelites. The quotations, besides generating dramatic aura, are found adding to the quality of realism; its colloquial nature helps the reader to grasp the import easily.

Repetition, an essential unifying element in nearly all poetry and prose, consists of sounds, syllables, words and phrase, etc. Explicitly, repetition of the same lexis appears in the form of anaphora, epistrophe and symploce, and the repetition of ideas in tautology and pleonasm etc. Alliteration, the repetition of consonance, specially at the beginning of the word, is a very old device in English verse(older than rhyme and is common in verse generally). However, Isaiah is found not to have many examples of alliteration in the New International Version(1983), but its few occurrences are observed to be functional rather than
decorative.

Euphemism refers to the substitution of a mild and pleasant expression for a harsh and blunt one such as to pass away for to die. It is a part of tact and proper communication. Isaiah highly learned as he was, is found quite often using euphemisms in accordance with his mild and meditative temperament. Only at a few places does he use harsh and pungent remarks.

Litotes, a negative phrase or statement, is also used to express the contrary. Antithesis which contrasts ideas by contrasting lexical items in a formal structure of parallelism is also present in the text. Such examples are too numerous in The Book of Isaiah.

Climax which presents the argument in an ascending order of importance, reserving the best point till the last and flashback, a formal feature pertaining to arrangement of plot, is found to be used relatively sparingly in the text. Its effect, in its occurrence is quite effective.

A passing reference may be made to innumerable figures of both types, viz, personification, apostrophe, hyperbole, oxymoron, paradox(54:1), irony(57:2), periphrasis(54:5), subtle sarcasm(46:6) -- very delicate, polished way of satire(46:7), inversion(49:25), syntactical repetition(43:23-24) which have not been dealt with in the present thesis on account of the limitation of scope and space. These figures, however, on closer observation are found to have many stylistic features which have been noted in the
case of major figures of meaning as well as those of form.

Personification, though a minor figure, abounds in the text from beginning to the end. Isaiah personifies all kinds of objects, e.g. trees, animals, places, earth, etc. imparting with textual discourse the liveliness and vividness of dramatic nature.

The whole text has plenty of personification:

Therefore the grave enlarges its appetite and opens its mouth without limit; into it will descend their nobles and masses with all their brawlers and revelers.

5:14

Here, the grave and its mouth are personified. They reveal how avariciously the power of death overwhelms the people.

Another example is found from musical instruments:

The gaiety of the tambourines is stilled, the noise of the revelers has stopped, the joyful harp is silent.

24:8
Precisely speaking, what are personified in the phrases the *gaiety of the tambourines* and the *noise of the revelers* are not the musical instruments but abstract senses *gaiety* and *noise*—however, in the last clause it is the musical instrument *the joyful harp*. Men's feeling rides in the tune of those instrument.

An effective way of personification is developed in such a way that abstract objects are visualized through living objects.

So justice is driven back, and righteousness stands at a distance; truth has stumbled in the streets, honesty cannot enter.

In the example above, *justice, righteousness* and *truth* which are abstract concepts are portrayed as men.

It is remarkable that personification is also found to be occurring single, paired, and clustered forms just like the similes, the metaphors and other figures. Another remarkable similarity is that images constituting it in pair and cluster are found to belong to the same semantic field.

In nature, human feeling is reflected in clusters as the
example below shows:

The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus,

35:1

Here, the desert, the parched land, and the wilderness are personified in clusters; they all belong to the same semantic field.

Compared to personification, apostrophe is used sparingly in the text. It, however, seems to have added variety to the personification. The text opens with apostrophe as below:

Hear, O heavens! Listen, O earth! For the LORD has spoken: "I reared children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against me.

1:2

Here, Isaiah addresses heavens and earth. Heavens and earth are personified to be objects listening to Isaiah's feelings of
lamentation.

Another example reflects the author's lamenting feeling in the example below:

Ah, sinful nation, a people loaded with guilt, a brood of evildoers, children given to corruption! They have forsaken the LORD; they have spurned the Holy One of Israel and turned their backs on him.

1:4

With the strong exclamation, *ah*, and a series of phrases. The apostrophe uncovers his feeling by reprimanding the Israelites.

The content is developed from lamentation to curses by an apostrophe as the example below shows:

Woe to the wicked! Disaster is upon them! They will be paid back for what their hands have done.

3:11
The apostrophe, thus, subtly brings out Isaiah's impatient urge to divulge the divine message delivered to him. Apostrophe, therefore, seems functional.

Paradox and sarcasm -- the high watermark of modern American and European poetry -- are surprisingly not found to be dominant stylistic techniques in Isaiah. The obvious reason seems to be that that age of yore despite chaos of religious values and morals was not as paradoxical as are the modern times.

Paradox is a statement which, though it appears self-contradictory, contains a basis of truth that reconciles the seeming opposites. (Beckson 1991: 190)

In the example below, God calls his adherent, blind and deaf which apparently is contradictory--how can God's servant be deaf and blind? As a matter of fact, they are found to be blind and deaf on account of excessive devotion to the Almighty.

Who is blind but my servant, and deaf like the messenger I send? Who is blind like the one committed to me, blind like the servant of the LORD?

42:19
This is continued in the following verse paradoxically,

You have seen many things, but have paid no attention; your ears are open, but you hear nothing.

42:20

In the text, Isaiah on the whole appears to adopt a scolding and jeering and commanding attitude towards the Babylonians. He, however, at places, appears to be highly sarcastic as in the example below:

Some pour out gold from their bags and weigh out silver on the scales; they hire a goldsmith to make it into a god, and they bow down and worship it.

46:6

They lift it to their shoulders and carry it; they set it up in its place, and there it stands. From that spot it cannot move. Though one cries out to it, it does not
answer; it cannot save him from his troubles.

46:7

His sarcasm in the above examples is directed toward an idolaters; the verses bring forth how the idolater gets an idol sculptured. Further, the idolaters' ritual of kneeling before it is described with tinge of sarcasm as soft and refined.

Hyperbole is customarily a dominant stylistic feature of humorous literature; it is a handy tool in the hands of clowns to throw the audience to bouts of laughter. In The Book of Isaiah, however, it is found to have an altogether different role. Using hyperbolic expressions, the author manages to instil in the reader/listener the omnipotence of God, the Almighty.

In the example below, God promises to do the impossible through a hyperbole. The hyperbole clearly convinces the reader of God's omnipotence.

I will lay waste the mountains and hills and dry up all their vegetation; I will turn rivers into islands and dry up the pools.

42:15
Repetition is the crux of Isaiah's stylistic feature. Chapter 5 focuses on the variety of repetition of lexical items only. Repetition is apparent at many levels in the text. The example below shows a syntactical repetition which seems to be one of the many emphatic devices of Isaiah.

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.

40:24

Sometimes relative clauses beginning with who are used in a clustered form as below:

This is what the LORD says—your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb:

I am the LORD,
who has made all things,
who alone stretched out the heavens,
who spread out the earth by myself,

who foils the signs of false prophets and
makes fools of diviners, who overthrows the learning of the wise and turns it into nonsense, who carries out the words of his servants and fulfills the predictions of his messengers, who says of Jerusalem, 'It shall be inhabited,' of the towns of Judah, 'They shall be built,' and of their ruins, 'I will restore them,' who says to the watery deep, 'Be dry, and I will dry up your streams,' who says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd and will accomplish all that I please; he will say of Jerusalem, "Let it be rebuilt," and of the temple, "Let its foundations be laid."'

44:24-28

To sum up, the thesis has touched upon major stylistic devices and has found two features: first, a range of variety in the case of almost every stylistic ingredient, and secondly the same pattern occurring not only in the case of figures of meaning but figures of form as well.

Isaiah, we had noted in the beginning is admired as high
poetry by even a materialist thinker such as Tom Paine. (*The Selected Work of Tom Paine*, p.295) for its poetry. We also noted that poetry as a discourse differs from other rational discourses in its figural mode. Our analysis examines and exemplifies this figural mode and shows that it is this extensive and varied mode that constitutes the effectiveness and excellence of *The Book of Isaiah* and has won the admiration of thinkers and scholars over time.