

Նաջուենյարդար - Բ.

Մեր վերջին գրուածները Կ ընդունէր որպէս հիմ այն կոանիթեայ սկզբունքը թէ հայ ժողովուրդի մէկ ու անբաժանելի ըլլալու ճշմարտութիւնը չէ արգիլած որ պատմական դէպքերու բերումով՝ անոր երկու հատուածները տարբեր հոգեբանութեամբ եւ աշխարհահայեացքներով պարգանան: Պրն. Սարգսեանի հոս այցը յարմար պատեհութիւնը նկատեցինք՝ քիչ մը յստակութիւն բերելու այդ տարբերութեան հետեւանքներուն վրայ (ջատ աւելի հանգամանաւոր եւ բացատրողական էջերու համար ընթերցողը կը յղենք Արջակ Չոպանեանի մէկ գրութեան, տպուած իր «Անահիտին» մէջ 1899, էջ 317):

Անտեղի չենք գտներ աւելցնել հիմա պատիկ ցանկ մը այն տագնապներուն կամ օրակարգային հարցերուն՝ որոնց յաճախանքին մէջ պիտի ապրինք հաւանաբար մինչեւ գալիք դար եւ որոնց լուծումին ամէն պարկեշտ եւ արի հայ պիտի տրամադրէ իր միտքն ու ջիղերը: Դիւրութեան համար, պանոնք երկուքի բաժնած ենք: Երրորդ յօդուած մը պիտի փորձէ ներկայացնել մետալիոնին միւս երեսը, այսինքն այն յարաբերաբար նոր, յուսադրիչ երեւոյթները որոնցմէ ուժ պիտի քաղէ մեր ժողովուրդը: Այնպէս որ երկու երեսներու համադրումէն միայն կարելի պիտի ըլլայ ճշմարիտ գաղափար մը կազմել մեր ազգի կայունութեան մասին:

Նայաստանի Տագնապները եւ Խնդիրները - Ապրիլ, 1990

1. Արցախի հարցին քաղաքական, մարդկային կամ ռազմական լուծումի մը տաժանագին փնտոտուքը եւ ազգային արժանապատուութեան ու հայրենիքի սրբութեանց պաշտպանութեան համար մղուելիք կոիւր:
2. Նայաստանի պաշարումին վերջ տալու եւ ապագային նման արարք մը անհնար դարձնելու հարցը:
3. Երկրաջարժի թողած աւերածութեան վերակառուցումը - մարդկային ու տնտեսական իմաստով -- եւ գաղթական ու վերաջիննութեան աշխատանքի անատակ բազմահազար հայերու հարցը:
4. Երկիրը կառավարող ձեռնհաս եւ վստահելի ղեկավարութեան բացակայութիւնը եւ այդ պակասը լեցնելու խնդիրը:
5. Ազգայնական, ժողովրդային, քաղաքական ու հակահամայնավար նոր խմբաւորումներու անհամերաջի վիճակը ու ժողովրդավար կառոյցներ հաստատելու անհրաժեշտութիւնը եւ դժուարութիւնները:
6. Կենսոլորտի ապականումին ներկայացուցած վտանգը:
7. 70 տարի բռնատիրութեան հետեւանքով երկրին մէջ տիրող բարոյական ալլասերումին ստեղծած տագնապը եւ անմիջական մաքրագործումի անհրաժեշտութիւնը:
8. Երկրի արդիւնաբերական ու տնտեսական կառոյցներու արդիականացումը:

One of the main reasons why the Armenians have survived so well through the endless centuries is their dispersion outside the homeland of their race, Armenia. Whether by choice or by necessity, the action of escaping the force of attraction of the center has acquired the symbolic value of maturation, a subtle act of independence from the tutelage of the homecountry. Understandably, a great number have "perished", meaning assimilated into other cultures. Those remaining have constituted the Diaspora, a "secret", quasi-esoterical association of dynamic, highly-motivated yet discreet people fiercely attached to their land of origin, Armenia, a land that they have kept alive, out there in the Caucasus and in Eastern Anatolia for a thousand years now, through their loyalty and love. So that, for centuries, to be an Armenian has meant being torn by two opposing tendencies -one of escape, the other of return. Those who have resolved this conflict between the centrifugal and the centripetal forces have survived as Armenians.

Nigoghos Sarafian is the first writer of the modern Armenian Diaspora who has solved this conflict between differing identities. Faced with three conflicting claims to his identity -- the traditional Armenian identity, the European or rather French identity and finally his own sense of who he is, Sarafian has come up with a poetic and prose work that harmonizes all three. This is a first approximation of his artistic achievement.

The centripetal drive in Sarafian is the force of love of life, in its physical and more urgently, its mental sense. This love is not some passion for a woman or for any visible reality. In its broadest form, it is the desire for clarity and lucidity of thought, a passion for absolute certainty and the need for a foothold on truth. Throughout his books, Sarafian tries desparately to extricate his mind from the snares of mind's own contradictions but he fails. The same thing happens with life and its ephemereal, illusory nature. In a word, he knows he has fallen in a trap and cannot control the obsession to liberate himself. The result of this effort is his poetry. It is a form of vengence, a love-hate drive, a real and abstract rage at his state of forlornness, sense of powerless dereliction before the contradictions of reality. This is the

core of his being, the sense of who he is, a total disponibility, the closed world of his private being and his universe of words. The world as a hostile place, as a moral concept in physical shape, as the theatre of an eternal and epic conflict between Good and Evil is not a new idea for Armenians who spend the better part of their time asking themselves whether they are good or bad Armenians and struggling with their conscience. This is the traditional self, Sarafian is entrapped in it and struggles to free himself of its stranglehold. In the last 150 years, only four or five writers have liberated themselves from this quicksand and Sarafian is one of them. He is an orphan of the Genocide, has no roots anywhere, his sky is empty of the typical divinites and nothing attaches him to any place on earth. He is the prototype of the Diasporian, a doomed father of the Diaspora who has no ancestors and will have no

descendants because he is so far ahead of anybody else, so unique. And because the Diaspora has no future that gives moral satisfaction, an idea that seems to throw back the imagination to the mythical figure of Mher the Young...

Sarafian feels like a shadow that takes the form of anything on which it falls, his surrounding landscape, cityscape or skyscape must constantly expand, escape in order to survive and all efforts at holding on to a center are doomed, for him. This second identity is the same as that of the Diaspora that must constantly spread out, disperse or else it will die. This is the law of the Diaspora, as Sarafian feels it. His entire poetry is a fireworks of jagged, craggy words and short, crisp sentences that bounce and explode in his head. All efforts at holding to a center are doomed, the Diaspora is a microcosm of the universe and the poet is a microcosm of the Diaspora.

That is the reason why Sarafian is the only poet of modern times not haunted by the nostalgia of the "return" to the source or the yearning for a home. His fierce independence of temperament permeates his poems which are in reality almost physical variants of his identity. His most important poetic statement, "Ebb and Flow" (Paris, 1939) is an orgy of destructiveness in language, in versification and in meaning. One almost feels the torture in writing it as well as the anguish of holding his body in place. No aesthetic principle, save that of extreme economy, of aversion to rhetoric and total freedom to the creative imagination seem to rule his talent. Poetry is a simple means, a vulgar instrument of prolongation of his physical presence to fill the void around and in him.

So, the return ruled out, the last dimension of Sarafian's identity comes into focus. Basically, his problem is moral, like the problem of truth whose centrifugal and chaotic energy dominates his writing. What can man do when wisdom and truth fail him, when the vanity, the absurdity and hopelessness of all human effort face him every instant? In one of his long poems, he tries to frame the question of the Being

"Where can I find the shining free world
far far from all this,
these lives ordered and false, sunk in their image,
their own victims, blind to their feint?
Is there a world where I am mine and I am I,
freed from my empty Ego enslaver of others' egos?

Mitchnapert, p. 41.

But Sarafian is ill-equipped to deal with these complex problems. So he turns it into an existential issue where his poetic intuition can find an answer. Here too, he wastes precious energy trying to portray the dilemma through long, allegorical, metaphorical poems and tales, he explodes in anger and a barrage of scathing images. Thus, the drama of a failed ideal, of a lost illusion and a childhood paradise, the tragedy of a wasted life dominate his poetic output and impart it a certain bitterness and violence. In the poetry and life of Sarafian, "truth" occupies the same place that "love" occupied in the poetry of Bedros Tourian and the "race" in the world of Varoujan. But he never gets anywhere with his obsession. At last,

he switches to prose and manages to come to terms with the enigma through his celebrated text "The Wood of Vincenne" (1947).

This text is a magnificent "tour de force" of the imagination mapping its own boundaries and describing its own fight with the elusive and "magical" essence of Truth." Every truth creates the desire for another truth" says Sarafian, interposing the voice of rationality in the fantastic flow of the imagination. Despair, doubts, solitude, joy and the sheer ecstasy of creating states of mind, moods, images, narrative elements, sensations alternate in this long document of the spiritual journey of the Diaspora poet to reach truth. But the tentative remains open-ended as far as its initial purpose is concerned and succeeds only as an artistic experience of beauty." Truth is born from the sham and returns back to it again. But the light that shines from it is beautiful" he adds, "and full of love" he concludes. Sarafian was the first Armenian poet to face the full force of Western philosophical skepticism but he succeeded to survive through his poetic talent.