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COMPOSITIONS BY JIVANI ON SOCIAL SUBJECTS

Jivani lived and composed in a tragic period of his Nation's history full of complex issues and contradictions.

Having taken root in Transcaucasia, were capitalist relations on the one hand, on the other – the liberation struggle of the Armenian people, mostly aimed against the Turkish despotism, there were bloody clashes between national groups in Transcaucasia, and also day by day growing social injustice and inequality and insurgency by the wide strata of the population against the ruling regime. This bunch of issues has found its expression in the songs by Jivani under numerous manifestations. Being in possession of inherent analytical mind and a profound perception of the complex phenomena of human existence, the artist in his songs mostly displays attitudes that are truthful and open-minded.

The turn of the 20th century brought sweeping changes in economic relations establishing new criteria for assessing moral values. The old, the patriarchal, is giving in with difficulty, while the new is not yet perceived or received. Jivani recognized the need for the new. In the song «Our Present»¹ starting with the words «A chicken is worth more than a man» (1907), Jivani can see no exit from the current situation, no salvation, the imminent, overwhelming progress of life is pushing him to hopeless and bitter expectations.

No matter how the musician minstrel recognizes the need for changes in the society, he cannot remain indifferent to their negative effects. The matter here is about the capitalist relationships nurturing the despicable phenomena incompatible with Christianity, which for Jivani with his perceptions of an Armenian Christian was utterly improper. In his song beginning with the words «It is a fashion now to abuse Faith» (1904) he characterized his contemporary public life as Faith and Holiness, and condemned the community of unworthy people pretending to be Christians who shamelessly rejected what is good, honorable and respectable, causing disdain even by the godless.

*In heartless and remorseless times you give all things to us,
And every day you send us pests,
Our younger generation abandoned the base line,
Both injuring themselves and hurting all the rest.
You are a lucky loner distant from the crowd.
You heed not empty words, and stay with pure heart².*

¹ Աշուղ Ջիվանի, 2009, 392:

² Ibid, 391.

In his compositions Jivani sounded multiple motifs of social injustice, inequality, vulnerability to poverty, homelessness and miserable life.

***They destroyed the house of the pauper,
No one came to protect him,
His head was knocked against the wall,
Who was the one that ate bread and butter?
They destroyed the house of the pauper,
No one came to protect him,
His head was knocked against the wall,
Who was the one that ate bread and butter?***³

In his song «Vane efforts, useless merits» the first line was: «we smote and were smitten and many things we done, 1904). In the song «About the Present Time»⁴ (starting with the line «Other animals, they have not been beaten so much», 1904) Jivani's words are very bitter, his contemporary public being described extremely negatively, condemning the multiple defects of everyday life.

***People remorseless, people dishonest,
They can easily burn, like brushwood
Starting a skirmish for empty affairs,
To muddy the waters and blood.***

The song «The Church bell sounds (1906) is very characteristic of the artist's contemporary life:

***Everyone carries a sword and a gun,
One kills another like animals,
The sea in billows, stones ajar,
As if poor Christ tried again.***⁵

The minstrel shows tolerant attitude towards the manifestations of large masses of people rising against social injustice. This is particularly about the protesting demonstrations in 1905 and the revolutionary movement, with its sharp end directed against the czarist despotism. Jivani can hear the sound of church bells, the roosters announce the sunrise, they call one outside, but he can hear only disgusting voices, seeing no light or hope. In the same composition, the artist seems to consider the changes too hasty and wants them to retard.

***Look at the sky, it is but dull and black,
No stars, the hiding moon in clouds goes back***

This mood was probably stipulated by a gradual decline of the Russian Revolution. Contradictory feelings, moods reflect the spirit of the period. While in

³ Ibid, 249.

⁴ Ibid, 131.

⁵ Ibid, 424.

1906 in this song he considered the radical changes as premature, in the song of 1904 he thought that the time had come to wake up.

***Enough to sleep, it is time to wake,
Hear your favorite rooster call, the beautiful.
Hurry up, torch bearer, your rays are all around,
Be quick, throw light into my courtyard,
The dusk will be dispelled by Venus and the Moon.***⁶

The public competition and the strive for possessing weapons equalizes the lives of a man and a chicken, and the poet notes:

***If the matter goes this way,
Man will be no more
The houses and places, village and city
Will become abode of beasts.***⁷

Jivani considers poverty and gradually deepening social injustice as public evil of his time. He feels pain of heart and sympathy to man suffering from injustice. In some of his songs the artist with his investigative mind presents this social evil as disturbing the man's natural life, denigrating for his soul and physically wearing out his body.

***A poor man's heart is like his dresses,
It is worn out and feeling mean,
From axe of cares all its vessels
Will be destroyed and very thin.***⁸

In the year 1900, Jivani wrote a song titled «A sad song»

According to the minstrel, the poor man is burdened by his load, he is not comfortable with playing and dancing, singing and merry-making, his mind is always busy. In the song «The Present Worry»⁹, starting with the words «Playing, singing, merry-making, wedding» (1899) he presents the situation in this way:

***Continuously plunged in thought he is,
And thinking, never free of thought,
At home little ones are waiting, five or six,
Give bread them now, that is what they want.***

It should be noted that the social compositions by Jivani have a national bias and meaning by the following reasons: the folk minstrel of the time, like other Armenian poets understood quite well that the dire social situation will stipulate the greatest evil for our Nation – the exile.

⁶ Ibid, 248.

⁷ Ibid, 186.

⁸ Ibid, 122.

⁹ Ibid, 315:

In his compositions on the subject of exile he specially emphasized the tragedy of abandoning the homeland, whether from persecutions or from the consequent material situation.

In the songs by Jivani, the patriotic motifs often associate themselves with displacement. Being well aware of the Armenian history, the artist understands the danger of exile and deportation: In the song «Question and Answer» (1905) he would ask a question:

***What was it that inflicted a big blow on the Armenians,
destroying the paradise country?***¹⁰,

The artist provides a definite answer:

***It was the deportation that dealt a big blow
destroying the paradise country***¹¹.

The demolition of Ani was also classified by Jivani as deportation. In 1902 he wrote a song «I came to see the ruins»¹². He equalized social maltreatment and deportation.

At the same time, Jivani viewed life in its progress, in endless stream of change. Nothing is stationary, today's beggar can become a tycoon tomorrow, and vice versa.

***Jivan, there are many things you ignore,
the world know all from old times,
It will make a mighty king out of a beggar,
While a beggar can be a former mighty king.***¹³

While the minstrel says that the world and the nature are smitten by pain, then even more tragic is the social situation. The artist's multilayered social motifs are sometimes contradictory. Awarding faith to the good creative substance of a human being, he at the same time touches the pessimistic strings.

***The world is theirs, who are lush
Who waste the people's blood
It is bad for those neglected.
The world will never hush.***¹⁴

So writes Jivani: To sad man what fun and games? For him the world is a smitten campfire, making him sad.

Nature and phenomena taking place in public life and in the spiritual and emotional world of the artist can be semantically reversed. In the song «Whoever I

¹⁰ Ibid, 156.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid. 211.

¹³ Ibid, 156.

¹⁴ Ibid, 272.

strike will make me dust» (1904) seems to be a summary of Jivani's pessimistic reflections.

***For Jivani there is no place to walk free
water and driness, rich in fire
each one more heartless and bad,
Water shines, dryness shines, man shines.***¹⁵

The composition written with such pain and care about the Nation's social situation shows Jivani's biological sensitivity to everyday cares and his abilities to reproduce them.

That situation was stipulated not only by his insights, but also by his social status, since need and care had been Jivani's companions to the end of his life.

Jivani, like all Armenian minstrel-poets, with few exceptions, lived a life of scarcity and privation. He was never exempt from the need to provide for his family's livelihood. However, meditations on social inequality in his songs are above the personal interests. Otherwise they would not have the value that they had and have these days. The minstrel viewed life in a more multicolored outlook, with a sharper and deeper perception of injustice. And it was not only his pain that tormented him showing no way out.

***Jivani, if I escape the flood or ruthless fire,
save myself from bullies or from a mean hoodlum,
From thousands of those killed by vile scoundrels,
Idle, parasitic, dissolute gangs,
Creative people have changed, became nothing,
Arsonists, looters, they became carnivorous beasts.***¹⁶

That was what the artist wrote in the afternoon of his creative life in the song «Creative men have changed, become mute and sluggish» (1907). This tragic and relentless statement by the poet confronting an indeterminate future is related to the social and national-political as well as economic spheres of life.

***A naive, poor people, what is on your mind?
To wander, to play the fool, no good ideas in mind.
Every day all around is blood,
At every quarter there is fire,
The parent curses the son, the son abhors the parent.
People benign and kind have become wicked and mean.
Truth-seekers are numb like sculptures of stone.***¹⁷

Observing the destructive effect of social inequality in the society, Jivani attempts to provide explanations, find ways and just solutions. The Christian, God-

¹⁵ Ibid, 499.

¹⁶ Ibid, 192.

¹⁷ Ibid.

loving minstrel in his song «I complain of the unfeeling and unfavorable world» (1905) arrives at an idea to present his case to the Holy Court for a just solution.

***Why should the like kill the like?
Man is surprised and stunned by the world of falsehood.
I applied to the Holy Court, Holy Court vernicle and just,
I believe in the unseen and mighty court,
I complained of the world, and will be tried in heaven,
I hope to win the case, I hope.***¹⁸

With regard to Jivani and other minstrels one question will arise, what is the role of the Armenian minstrel, what his mission is, what is his distinction from the minstrels of other nations, and what his message is to the posterity.

The Armenian minstrel had a mission from heaven to be a favorite singer as well as to live by the Nations woes and everyday cares. Gevorg Akhverdian, the first Armenian researcher of minstrels, open-minded and patriotic intellectual has suggested interesting characteristics of their role: (they are universally respected, in celebrations they were funny, in grief they mourned with the Nation, and they provided comments and explanations to the sermons, thus contributing to education.¹⁹:

Jivani as a singer and composer in his creative life gives much emphasis to the problem of measure and substance. In the song «There is no sense in your songs if you are an immature poet» (1899); returning to this theme, he notes: «It has neither measure nor substance, your poem. We think that the song is aimed at a definite personality, but it is significant for substantiating Jivani's conviction. The times have changed, some pundits distinguish very narrow differences, so that it is better to keep away from those praising critics, to disbelieve the false words. The irony by the minstrel also has measure and substance.

***The critic of your book has measured your mind,
And found nothing, having done a lot of work.
In his journals your laudator is cheater,
He invented it all, the rascal and scum.***²⁰

Jivani lived a life of privations, a materially unsecure life. With the passing years, his audience dwindled, worsening the situation even further. Jivani's concern with regard to this situation derives from the events characteristic of Armenian life. The Armenian literary figure, the minstrel, was condemned to a life of misery and insecurity, particularly after losing working efficiency. In his composition «The poor singer that has grown old is not too good at revelry» (1890)» Jivani, of course, depicted some of his colleagues, however, he shows a generalized portrate of a minstrel having the song as a sole source of his livelihood.

¹⁸ Ibid, 143.

¹⁹ Ախվերդյան Գ., 1852, 1:

²⁰ Աշուղ Զիվանի, 295:

*The time is running ahead continuously
No strength left, dissatisfied, poor aged singer,
Being of old age, the dear songs have no listeners,
Gold escapes his mouth, poor aged singer.*²¹

Հ. Սահակյան, E.G., adverts the following lines by Dool Hovhannes which are coherent with lines by Jivani.

*You have your life – handout to the poor
One day it may be gone,
There may be nothing, your life is just a bubble.
The only truth is that there is the end.
Come over, you, the son of Adam,
Do always good, do not forget the sole...*²²

In his songs Jivani meditates on the brotherhood of people and equality, so as there be no masters or servants. He comprehended the difference between the old and the new, the transitory nature of the old and the immanent advent of the new. He characterized the new time with almost formulaic rhymed words: force, mind, wealth. Well understanding the imminence of life, he recognized its negative phenomena brought in by the new, particularly stressing the social inequality within the society, as well as the supreme role of weapons and force.

English by Hachatoor

ՄԱՏԵՆԱԳԻՏՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ

Աշուղ Զիվանի, Անհայտ երգեր, աշխտ. Թ. Պողոսյանի, Երևան, 2009:

Ախվերդյան Գ., Գուսանք, Սայաթ-Նովա, Մոսկվա, 1852:

Սահակյան Հ., Հայ աշուղներ, XVII–XVIII դդ., ԳԱ հրտ., Երևան, 1961:

²¹ ԱՋԱԵ, 225:

²² Սահակյան Հ., 1961, 35:

ԹՈՎՄԱՍ ԳՈՂՈՍՅԱՆ

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ՋԻՎԱՆՈՒ ՍՈՑԻԱԼԱԿԱՆ ԹԵՄԱՆԵՐՈՎ ՍՏԵՂԾԱԳՈՐԾՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐԸ

Ջիվանու ստեղծագործություններում իրենց որոշակի տեղն ունեն սոցիալական թեմաներով և կյանքի անարդարության դեմ գրված բանաստեղծությունները: Դրանց մի մասը ընդհանուր բնույթի է, և ներկայացնում է բանաստեղծի խորհրդածությունները կյանքի անարդարությունների մասին: Երկրորդ խումբն այն բանաստեղծություններն են, որոնք գրվել են ժուլտական առաջին հեղափոխության անմիջական ազդեցությամբ:

Այս թեմայով ստեղծագործություններում Ջիվանին շարունակ ընդգծում է, որ արտադրական նոր հարաբերությունները չպետք է զարգանան ի հաշիվ մարդկանց, նրանց զրկելով ապրուստի միջոցներից:

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ПОЭЗИЯ ДЖИВАНИ НА СОЦИАЛЬНЫЕ ТЕМЫ

Определённая часть поэзии Дживани написана на социальные темы и направлена против несправедливости жизни. Другая тема, которая просматривается в поэзии Дживани – Первая Русская Революция.

В произведениях на эту тему Дживани подчеркивает, что новые производственные отношения не должны развиваться во вред народу, лишая его средств к существованию.

Гусан осуждает новые тенденции, появляющиеся в современной культуре, которые несовместимы с христианской традицией («Հալաւ, հոգի հայհոյել մնաւ է դարձել հիւս» սկզբնաւորով, 1904 թ.) (Стало модным ругать Веру и Святой Дух, 1904 г.). Дживани видел в себе защитника бедных.

Дживани ощущает большую симпатию и сострадание к бедному человеку.

Бедный человек раздавлен своими заботами, его ум постоянно занят (песня «Այժմիս հոգի», 1899) (Текущие заботы).

Социальные произведения Дживани по большей части имеют национальный уклон и интересы. В своих песнях, посвящённых паломничеству и путешествиям, он показывает горе и печаль жизни на чужбине из-за угнетения и бедности. Патриотические мотивы в песнях Дживани зачастую сливаются с песнями на тему паломничества и ссылки, которая является большой опасностью для нации («Հարց ու ցաւաւիժիւն», 1905) (Вопрос и ответ).

Борьба против социальной несправедливости – то же самое, что борьба против эмиграции («Եկա տեսա կիսակենդանի ավերակ», 1902 (Я пришёл и увидел руины и крах).

Дживани говорит с такой горечью о повседневной жизни, потому что он сам был крайне бедным и нуждающимся. Дживани прожил жизнь, которая была социально необеспечена и ничтожна, в одной из его песен представлен образ гусана, который жил исключительно своей песней.

В мире будущего, описанном Дживани, люди равны и счастливы, но новая жизнь приходит со своим превосходством силы, оружия и социальной несправедливостью.