

Samvel Poghosyan

My Narekatsi

- Mystery of Grigor Narekatsi's Trial
- His Philosophical Teaching
- The Concept of the Man

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Poghosyan Samvel

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Samvel Poghosyan's book "My Narekatsi" is devoted to the mystery of the tenth-century genius poet and philosopher Grigor Narekatsi's trial and his philosophical teaching.

The monograph covers the author's research carried out in 1970-80-ies.

*Assuming that Nikolas of Cusa is regarded
as the forefather of the European science,
Grigor Narekatsi is undoubtedly its founder-father.*

S. Poghosyan

Introduction

The end of the first and the beginning of the second millennia A.D. witnessed momentous changes in the Armenian homeland. They were great progressive changes, important developments towards national independence and social progress. It was a period of transition from Early Feudalism to Late Feudalism, and, as any transitional period, it was also an era of utmost aggravation of social-political, social-economic conflicts, ideological clashes, reconsideration of the foundations of dominant ideologies, reevaluation and reinterpretation of cultural values. And though the statehood was restored in Armenia, in parallel with the external threat, the problems of national independence, the establishment and sustention of a united and centralized state kept on being unsolved; continuous discords between separate feudal formations decomposed and tortured the country and prevented the achievement of a national unity. On the one hand, feudal relations strengthened, underwent automatic development and were improved (bondage of a great number of peasants in the result of the intensification of feudal exploitation, pressure apparatuses structure strengthening of secular and religious authorities, economic and military reinforcement, the great center-cities of feudal formations flourished—crafts and trades were developed), on the other hand, the resistance of the exploited stiffened too; class struggle escalated.

From this period on, during next several centuries great qualitative changes took place in the spiritual life of the Armenian people with some ups and downs; the unity of these changes comprises a prominent era which is rightfully called “the Armenian Renaissance”.

Grigor Narekatsi, a great thinker and a genius poet of the 10th century, was an outstanding representative of the Armenian Early Renaissance. During the period he lived, the ripened conflicts of reality reflected in spiritual culture gave rise to an ideological acute struggle. The mainstreams of that ideological struggle were the reconsideration of Christian ideology (nationalization of Christianity, interpretative freethinking, which was an expression of discords too), pantheism and even atheism. The reconsideration of dominant ideas became urgent, but the

representatives of the rivaling camps of that ideological struggle approached the problem from different points of view and with different purposes. One of the parties wanted to reconsider that ideology in order to improve it, the other one to criticize, even to deny it and promote new ideological foundations.

However, the common active interest in the ancient, especially Hellenistic culture and philosophy and the ideological sources of Christian theology united all the members of that struggle.

From the 10th century on, “the Armenian science and philosophy had been showing a growing interest in the Hellenistic culture and philosophy... Representatives of the Renaissance would naturally turn to the spiritual past of their nation, more precisely, to the Hellenistic dimension of the Armenian philosophy”. Grigor Narekatsi was one of the founders of this process.

His literary-philosophical heritage seemed to summarize the achievements of the Armenian literary and social-philosophical thought in the first millennium and outline the new tendencies of the Armenian spiritual culture in the second millennium. “Grigor Narekatsi marked the transition from the Middle Ages to new times in Armenia not only as a genius poet but also as a great thinker and philosopher. Grigor Narekatsi was the innovator of the Armenian literary and social-philosophical thought in Medieval Armenia”¹.

As a great thinker, Narekatsi was the true son of his era, and his whole ideology was conditioned by national and social problems put forward by the Early Renaissance itself.

The generalization of these concrete problems was reflected in Narekatsi’s ideological-philosophical system, i.e. the great medieval thinker considered the world’s and man’s changing for the better, kinder and more perfect to be the essence of the national and social liberation. It comprised the main axis, the progressive-humanistic trend of his ideology. And it was the trend that enabled clergymen to accuse the great humanist of adhering to the Tondrakian movement.

It may seem that thinking that the national and social liberation consists in the perfection of the man and his mode of life, Narekatsi approached the solution of these concrete problems only from abstract-humanistic standpoints, from the standpoint of the universal depending on the individual (this dependence is real as well, but decisive is, of course, the dependence of the individual upon the universal, determination of the individual by the universal and not vice versa), so he thought that only by an individual’s education, perfection, “salvation” and “return” can the perfection of the society and even the whole universe be achieved but he simultaneously put forward the problem of reaching an individual’s perfection through the perfection of society

¹ Narekatsi was appraised so by Tumanyan and other merited people.

as a whole, though the medieval thinker did not have a chance to go deep into these problems because of well-known reasons (it was just impossible to explain the whole mechanism of society development in the 10th century, though he viewed the society as a combination of opposites and for its unity, and even for its sameness and “balance” he strived), but the advancement of the idea of an individual’s dependence upon society, social relations, social existence, and the idea of reaching an individual’s perfection through the perfection of society was already a great achievement.

Narekatsi did not just adhere to but was one of the greatest ideologists of Reformation, which was a popular movement at the time, and though the main mover was the serf peasantry, it was not a mere peasant movement.

Most probably, poor masses in cities, as well as the progressive representatives of secular and religious ruling classes, were included in or sympathized with that movement.

The ideology of reformation was not uniform, it had two wings:

1. Fighting, denying God and the clerical-feudal hierarchy.
2. Moderate, displeased with the violence of the ruling power and clerical-feudal hierarchy but not wholly stepped aside from or having refused them.

With his views, Narekatsi occupied a central place in this movement.

Thus Grigor Narekatsi, a genius poet and thinker, appeared in the Armenian reality during the Early Renaissance when the society had great expectations² and hoped for new, positive changes. He was the exponent of ideological multiple searches for overcoming acute controversies of his era, defining the problems (something that was a great service in itself) raised during that era and giving specific solutions to them.

Narekatsi was, surely, the most prominent ideologist and the most popular person of his times, a progressive thinker and representative of the Armenian Renaissance, the true mirror of that epoch which was full of conflicts. All the ideological trends and tendencies of his times, even the opposite standpoints such as devotion and atheism, obedience and revolt and others were not alien to him. He was indifferent to man’s neither good nor bad manifestations. He attributed to

² We should not forget that it was the end of the first millennium, and the whole Christian world expected Christ’s second all-saving coming. In the Armenian reality, there were many cases when there appeared false “Christs” who were made heroes of folk legends and were the bearers of the ideas of the Tondrakian movement. By the way, the sanctification of Narekatsi’s name and the fact that his name inspired folk legends were a result of those expectations too; the hero of these legends, Grigor, was sometimes a shepherd, sometimes a clergyman, etc. He was presented as a universal, almighty savior—from working ordinary miracles to establishing social justice.

himself everything human, all that referred to the man and he did that consciously, his theoretical basis being the thesis put forward by him:

I in all, and all in me (Pr. 72, C)

The folk epic “Sasna Tsrer” (Daredevils of Sassoun) and “Narek” (people called Grigor Narekatsi’s main work – *Book of Lamentations* – *Narek*) have been venerated and sanctified by the Armenian people. As the most popular works of the Early Renaissance, raising the most important problems in Armenia, they expressed the public concern in seeking ways for national and social liberation as well as the expectations for new, great changes.

The main difference of these two works consists in the fact that “Sasna Tsrer” is a reflection of that epoch while “Narek” is a psychological-philosophical meditation. However, with the large scales of raised problems and the depth of solutions, these two masterpieces comprise “the book of life”³ of all times in the Armenian history. And this fact determined the popularity of the *Narek* as a work created by a man. Legends and myths about its author witness to that popularity and the fact that the Armenian people take *Narek* equal to a folk epic and consider it their visiting-card, like Rustaveli’s *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* is for the Georgians, and *Narty Epic* for the Caucasian highlanders.

Grigor Narekatsi’s literary heritage, rich in content, has been and is studied in many aspects: literary-critical (including translation theory), historical-philosophical, linguistic, textual, etc. The value of the recent studies in all these aspects enables us to state that there has been formed a unique domain in Armenian studies – Narekatsi science which still has many unsolved problems, particularly in the field of Narekatsi’s philosophical views. The work done in this field is classified into two periods: in the first period (mostly interpretations) Narekatsi’s ideology was mainly elucidated and evaluated from religious-dogmatic standpoints (G. Avetiqyan, H. Nalyan and others), the second is the period of historical elucidation and evaluation (A. Chopanyan, M. Abeghyan, Leo, M. Mkryan, H. Gabrielyan, G. Chaloyan, G. Khrlopyan).

Narekatsi’s worldview is still not fully studied. Studies conducted by now concern this or that aspect of his views and the main point is mostly the nature of his worldview. The elucidation of this problem has undergone a considerable development. At first Narekatsi’s worldview was described as a religious mysticism, and no progressive (secular) tendency, color or element was attributed to it (Abeghyan’s initial opinion, Leo), then Narekatsi’s progressive views were

³ Narekatsi called so his book.

revealed and his philosophical worldview was qualified as pantheism (H. Gabrielyan, M. Mkryan). Chaloyan made a great contribution to the revelation of the nature of the *Narek*. In his well-known article devoted to Narekatsi, he considered Narekatsi's philosophy as pantheistic but "it is not only a pantheistic philosophy but also an indication to Neo-platonic philosophy as a source for pantheism". This was already a substantial progress towards the exact characterization of the nature of Narekatsi's philosophy. Thus, according to Chaloyan, the nature of Narekatsi's philosophy was pantheism and Neo-Platonism was only "indicated" as a source of pantheism. Today it is obvious that Narekatsi's worldview was Neo-platonic but the question has not been settled yet. Narekatsi was the representative of Neo-Platonism in the period of the Renaissance; he developed Neo-platonic ideas to a certain degree. It is not a mere imitation or literal revival of Hellenistic and Christian Neo-Platonism but a definite, a higher-level development with almost the same tendencies that we see in the works of Nicolas of Cusa. As to pantheism, it is not the main essence of Narekatsi's worldview and his philosophical system but only an aspect, an element of that system, and the whole system is structured not on the basis of pantheism but of Neo-Platonism and traditions of the Corpus Areopagiticum, while the idea of pantheism is indicated as one of the conclusions of Neo-platonic philosophy.

* * *

Gr. Narekatsi's literary heritage has had a deep influence on the spiritual development of the Armenian nation. Even today, his works, valuable in all times, especially the *Book of Lamentations*, are very popular and are included in the field of youth's ideological and moral-aesthetic education. In this sense, the scientific study of the great thinker's whole worldview is very important. It will shed light on the purposeful mastery of his literary heritage and will meanwhile fill up the corresponding gap in Narekatsi studies.

In my opinion, besides educational and scientific-historical importance, the study of Narekatsi's worldview and especially the study of his method have also scientific-practical significance. My attitude towards Narekatsi's philosophical heritage has been strictly "pragmatic". The main thing that is charming, striking and admirable in Narekatsi is his dialectical logic, the method of structuring his philosophical system. The Armenian great thinker's philosophical searches are an interesting experience in the historical development of Dialectics. Many elements of Narekatsi's philosophical heritage should be accurately studied, reinterpreted and appropriately evaluated in the contemporary science and most of them deserve to be included in the circulation of today's scientific thought as active means and principles. I have included and used Narekatsi's "logic", the dialectics of the universal and individual, the big and small in one of my works, *The Armon*

Structure of Metauniverse. As a valuable achievement, Narekatsi's positive experience of philosophizing can and must be used in the contemporary development of philosophical problems, especially dialectics as a method and system of scientific cognition. This expresses not only the historically timeless value of Narekatsi's philosophy but, most importantly, also the actual value of some of his principles and theses.

* * *

In order to assess Narekatsi's worldview completely, to establish his place in the history of the Armenian and world social-philosophical thought, to reveal the whole system of his philosophical views and to show the "concept of Man" in that system and finally to discover Narekatsi's method it is necessary to overcome the following difficulties: firstly, it is necessary to discover the objective and subjective factors of Narekatsi's formation as a great thinker (to reveal the social-economic and political conditions and the ripened problems in the Armenian reality in the 10th century, the main cultural trends and peculiarities determined by them, as well as the sources of Narekatsi's worldview, including the spiritual environment in the monastery of Narek). These are the difficulties of the initial approach the overcoming of which will shed light on the elucidation of Narekatsi's worldview.

The main difficulty connected with this research is the form and the way of narration in Narekatsi's main work, *Book of Lamentations*; Narekatsi tried to include into it what is non-includable and he managed it to the maximum extent humanly possible.

Though the scientific, philosophical linguo-mentality of his times was developed on the basis of David Anahaght's (David the Invincible) and Anania Shirakatsi's worldviews, the system of concepts and categories was not so flexible in order to enable him to convey the non-conveyable ("untarnished") in the language of science. Therefore, Narekatsi tried to fulfill his intention by means of poetry and figurative linguo-mentality. He did that consciously firstly because the author had an intention of writing something greater than a meager philosophical treatise. He did his best to make his book reach not only the readers' minds but also hearts. In the *Narek*, he paid great attention to the unity and transmutation of thought and emotion: a bright thought must be also emotional. The most important fact for the author was probably the figurative linguomentality: the possibility of multiple interpretations of linguistic units and image-symbols enabled him to disguise and transmit some audacious ideas.

The overcoming of this kind of difficulties is decisive for the discovery of the system of his philosophical views. For instance, the image-symbols of the incarnate Word of God, Christ, and

Mary can be correctly perceived only when comparing their comprehension in a context with their comprehension based on Narekatsi's whole worldview. Surface breaks and "disconnectedness" of some of Narekatsi's views are a kind of disguise for their deep interconnection, unity and mutual completion.

One of the difficulties is Narekatsi's manner of wording or as the author himself calls it "logic". It is, in fact, the method of Narekatsi's philosophy, the common logic of his ideas.

Mystery of Grigor Narekatsi's Trial

1. The Armenian Reformation and the School of Narek

As it has already been mentioned in the introduction, the 10th century brought momentous changes to the Armenian land. It was a period when the exploited and oppressed classes, the main movers of the successful national liberation struggle against Arab invaders, pinned their great hopes on the restoration of the Armenian statehood. But their hopes for social reforms and improvements of life conditions went down the drain. Moreover, the bondage of peasants, dating from the 10th century, their oppressions and exploitation resulted in an internal unrest, which developed into an anti-clerical, anti-feudal powerful movement called Armenian Reformation.

Prof. V. K. Chaloyan writes, "In Armenia, under the conditions of the dominant role of the church and the utmost aggravation of conflicts between different social classes, the medieval revolutionary opposition could struggle against feudal enslavement in no other way than the obvious religious heresy. But, in fact, the struggle was against inequality and for a new type of social relations. The so-called "Tondrakian" movement, i.e. Reformation, was such an obvious religious heresy in Armenia".

On the one hand, V. Chaloyan rightfully notes that the Tondrakian movement in Armenia coincided with only one struggling wing of the European Reformation—the heretical, plebeian-peasant wing headed by Thomas Munster and others; on the other hand, he identifies Tondrakian movement with the whole Reformation. But like the European (German) Reformation, comprising not only the plebeian-peasant movement led by Thomas Munzer, the Tondrakian movement was only one of the manifestations of the Armenian Reformation. In the Armenian reality, besides the Tondrakians, the Reformation included a movement headed by the supporters of moderate reforms and innovations; with its main problems, that movement resembled Lutheranism. Though the "moderates" were identified with the Tondrakians and equally persecuted by the clerical-feudal conservatives who were against any, even the slightest innovation, the "moderates" were quite different from the Tondrakians. They did not support the Tondrakians' "radical" ideas (denial of God and the church hierarchy, etc.). Though they were displeased with the injustice, the violence and severe exploitation on the part of feudal-clerical hierarchy, they did not deny them completely. On the contrary, seeing that because of "sluggard and carnal" clergymen's oppressions and exploitation their influence on people weakened, and people got out of feudal and clerical control and obedience, also realizing how much that tendency could damage the national and spiritual-cultural unity of the Armenian people in the

absence of a united statehood, the “moderates” suggested that the church should make some reforms. In order to democratize the church, they tried to simplify the clerical-feudal hierarchy (but not to eliminate it) and to enliven church rituals.

In the 10th century, one of the centers of that ideological current of the Armenian Reformation was the monastery-school of Narek. The first prominent representative of that school was Khosrov Andzevatsi, a genius poet, Grigor Narekatsi’s father who “did not live in the monastery but had relatives there and was in the closest creative relations with its representatives and belonged to the same literary family”⁴.

We learn from Armenian historians Asoghik, Kirakos Gandzaketsi and Stepanos Orbelian that Catholicos Anania Mokatsi appointed Khosrov, already renowned as an eminent scholar, the bishop of the province of Andzevatsik. Khosrov undertook to introduce some innovations into the church. At first, the Catholicos did not pay attention to those actions. But later when the bishop of Andzevatsik went too far with his innovations he was criticized, persecuted and pursued by the Catholicos.

Fortunately, Catholicos Anania Mokatsi’s epistles were preserved and by famous philologist, Galust Ter-Mkrtychyan’s efforts they were published in the journal *Ararat* in 1897. One can learn about Khosrov Andzevatsi’s innovations from these letters and why the Catholicos anathematized him. One of the letters addressed to Bishop Khosrov Andzevatsi is entitled: “The reason of Lord Anania Mokatsi’s anathematizing Bishop Khosrov Andzevatsi”. Anania Mokatsi wrote in the letter: “In the year 954, Bishop Khosrov Andzevatsi, who was a modest and wise elderly man, suddenly driven by an evil force, began to speak deviously, distorted words without any reason. For instance, he began to pronounce *kyurake* instead of *kiraki* (Sunday), *Erusaghem* instead of *Erusaghem* and many other words. Then he made senseless demands, e.g. to shave children’s head until they are grown up, and so he was called “a cutter”. Another demand was to let hair and beard grow longer, and so he was called “a child”. Then he introduced into the church other nonsense, e.g. he spoke ill of cross, saying that a cross blessed by clergymen is equal to an unblessed one, i.e. he considered the blessing of crosses needless. And we forgave him this all”⁵.

It is notable that the Catholicos forgave him those innovations, but when Khosrov raised the question of the simplification of the church hierarchy, reduction of the number of the nine orders of the church he aroused the ire of the Catholicos: “Where did you get the idea that you could

⁴ “International conference of Armenian Medieval Literature, theses of reports”, Yerevan, 1986, p. 66.

⁵ “Ararat”, 1897, pp. 276-277.

emphasize three church orders, excluding the others? Even Dionysius whom you trust so much enumerates seven orders and writes an accusation against subdeacon Demophilos, while you mention only three orders and not more. And you say that those (the orders) are established according to merits, i.e. the lower ones, and that you are more respected than those holding lower posts, and you are the advisor of God's servants; deacons, priests, high priests, their disciples. If one deviates from the orders, the whole system will be ruined and there will be chaos. Thus he (Dionysius) did not cease to recognize three orders, moreover in course of time he added other useful principles and consequently it is necessary to accept that the nine-order hierarchy is very important to the church, where disciples long to receive orders (commands) from the Holy Spirit nine times"⁶.

With the reduction of the number of church orders and hierarchy, Khosrov Andzevatsi wanted to simplify the Armenian Church, to eliminate the gap between the church and people. That way clergymen would become less occupied with their own concerns, would be closer to people and would be a greater success in strengthening faith in them. In Khosrov's opinion, the great number of church orders stimulated clergymen's prosperity and viciousness, thereby causing the inner collapse of the church. Anania Mokatsi wrote, "I know you want to destroy the religious power, which you cannot do; for they (the orders) do not destroy but strengthen it even more."⁷

The Catholicos was angry with him mostly because he dared to reject "the holiest of holies", the feudal bases of the church organization. Here it refers to Khosrov Andzevatsi's refusal to give presents to the Catholicos. That "present" was like paying taxes. From the Catholicos' letters we learn that Khosrov refused to pay such tributes saying: "Who's made me the Catholicos' taxpayer?" And as Kirakos Gandzaketsi told, he tried to justify it in the following way: "The bishop needn't give presents to the Catholicos as they say he is not higher, the difference is only in titles"⁸.

Anania Mokatsi viewed Khosrov's attitude as an attempt to introduce a new heresy into the Armenian Church: "Then he began to introduce a heresy into the church as he said that angles and archangels are honored and glorified equally, so must be bishops and patriarchs, emphasizing that it is written that a reader is conferred the title of deacon, the deacon may become a priest, and there are still titles to be promoted. The episcopacy follows the priesthood, there are no further titles after this one, just superiority in regard to throne. And the advance from episcopacy to the title of patriarch is not called promotion, i.e. there are no more titles: one

⁶ Ibid., pp. 286-288.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 277-280.

⁸ Kirakos Gandzaketsi, *Patmutyun Hayots* (History of the Armenians), Yerevan, 1961, p. 85-86.

throne and one honor to both a bishop and a patriarch. And so, patriarch, is just a name, not a double honor”⁹.

Concealing the real social aspect of the issue, the Catholicos accused Khosrov of separatism and betrayal: “This cruel and evil, destructive intention leads to the destruction of the whole power of the church and to the elimination of indestructible borderlines between clergymen, i.e. each of them becomes a separate priest and house (acts independently from the others), hence an evil for the society”. The angry Catholicos continued: “He has secret intentions; that is why we have asked him many times to give up that wrong and irrational decision, we have begged even with tears in our eyes but he would not listen”.

“With tears in his eyes” the cunning and hypocritical Catholicos asked Khosrov Andzevatsi not to revolt, to be obedient and do his duty, i.e. give luxurious presents to the Catholicos, in other words to pay the demanded tribute. But as bishop Khosrov refused to do it he was anathematized by the Catholicos.

For his innovations, the contemporaries accused Khosrov Andzevatsi of being a Chalcedonian, a “tsayt”, i.e. one who deviates from the Armenian official faith. And he wrote the following in this concern: “If one of the Armenians adopts the canons of other nations, considering them true, he will be considered a tsayt, i.e. a schismatic, apostate. He will be mocked, persecuted and threatened with death”¹⁰.

Reformation caused a true revival in the field of culture in Armenia.

From the 10th century on, during the next four or five centuries (with some ups and downs) there occurred many qualitative changes in the life of the Armenian people. The unity of these changes comprises a very remarkable period in the development of Armenian culture, and this period is rightfully called “the Armenian Renaissance”¹¹.

The conflicts of reality, being reflected in the spiritual culture, caused an acute ideological struggle. In the sphere of culture, in parallel with the strengthening of the oppressive influence of Christian ideology “from above”, the opposition of secular thinking and the elements of the secular culture “of below” strengthened too: from the reconsideration of the foundations of Christian ideology (interpretative freethinking, which was an expression of irreconcilability, too) to pantheism and atheism – these were the main currents of that ideological struggle. The period required to reconsider the dominant ideas (though the conservative circles of the clergy

⁹ “Ararat”, 1897, p. 277.

¹⁰ Khosrov Andzevatsi, *Meknutyun Zhamagroc* (Commentary on Book of Hours), Constantinople, 1840, p. 199.

¹¹ V. K. Chaloyan, *Haykakan renesans* (The Armenian Renaissance), Yerevan, 1964.

supported the irrefutability of Christian dogmas and were against their free interpretation) but the representatives of the two (rivalry) currents of the Reformation approached them differently and with different purposes. One of the parties sought to reconsider the ideology in order to improve it, the other party strictly criticized it trying to reject it and to put forward new ideological foundations.

However, the representatives of the two currents of the Armenian Reformation had something in common: it was the active interest in the past, particularly in the Hellenistic culture and philosophy. From the 10th century on, “the Armenian science and philosophy had been showing a growing interest in the Hellenistic culture and philosophy... Representatives of the Armenian Renaissance would naturally turn to the spiritual past of their nation, more precisely to the Hellenistic orientation of the Armenian philosophy”¹². The founders of that phenomenon were Khosrov Andzevatsi, an Armenian great medieval thinker, and the two prominent representatives of Narek School, Anania and Girgor Narekatsi.

Anania Narekatsi was the first to lay the foundation of the process of secularizing the ecclesiastical literature and poetry. Clearly realizing the requirements of his time, people’s humanistic moods and thinking, Anania Narekatsi tried to enliven church rituals to a certain degree and attain the intensification of their influence. Due to Anania Narekatsi’s creative innovation, such ecclesiastical genres as sermon, ode and admonition underwent a new qualitative development.

First of all, Anania Narekatsi theoretically grounded the necessity to use secular elements in literature. Hrachya Tamrazyan, a literary critic, wrote that in Anania Narekatsi’s opinion a composer should take his images and examples of regret from secular life: “...like farmers who make instruments, before the work begins in the field. In the same way, we must know the purity of the earthlings about whom the disciple says: ‘The invisible is learned through the visible created by God’”¹³.

Anania Narekatsi is presented as a philosopher, musician, poet and rhetorician in Armenian literature. He is one of the highly merited persons of the Armenian medieval culture. As a writer-innovator, he paid more attention to the man’s inner rite, inner prayer, inner monologue which serve to the man’s inner purification. He developed a thesis of inner prayer, trying to

¹² V. K. Chaloyan, *David Anhaghti Pilisopayutyune* (The Philosophy of David Anhaght), Yerevan, 1946, p. 195-196.

¹³ See H. H. Tamrazyan’s article: *Anania Narekatsi’s poem “For the earthly life”*, Historical-Philological Journal, 1980, vol. 4, p. 185.

penetrate into the creative process, to go deep into its peculiarities and essential features”¹⁴. Grigor Narekatsi developed this creative approach in his mystic poem *Book of Lamentations*.

The mysticism and ascetics preached by Anania and Grigor Narekatsi first of all referred to “sluggard and carnal” clergymen, feudal and money-loving churchmen. This was the reason for both of them to be accused of being Tondrakians by high-ranking clergymen. In the middle of the forties of the 10th century, at the request of Catholicos Anania Mokatsi, Anania Narekatsi wrote a voluminous work, *Protest Against the Tondrakians and Other Sectarians* in which he criticized the Tondrakian (the struggling wing of Armenian Reformation) ideology and activity, viewing them as unacceptable radicalism. However, this did not help the author to avoid accusations either, as on the downhill of his life he himself was suspected in adhering to that sect and at death’s door he wrote a *Letter of Confession* by the Catholicos’ order. Prof. M. Mkryan wrote in this concern, “As a mystic Anania could have a criticizing attitude towards the clergy, and in order to restrain it, the Catholicos could easily qualify it as an expression of sectarianism (under the conditions of the widespread Tondrakian struggle). Later Grigor Narekatsi was treated in the same way too”¹⁵.

Grigor Narekatsi was the most prominent figure of Narek scientific-educational and cultural-enlightening center. The genius poet and thinker became a great innovator of spiritual life in medieval Armenia. His literary-artistic invaluable heritage laid the foundation of the secularization and humanization of not only literary-artistic but also social-philosophical thought. Even his contemporaries venerated him as a great philosopher and scientist, poet, rhetorician and musician. Great is his contribution to the flourishing and development of the literary language of medieval Armenia. He was a great creator of language.¹⁶

The spiritual-cultural atmosphere at the school of Narek was conditioned by Khosrov Andzevatsi’s and Anania Narekatsi’s prolific activity and creative, scientific-pedagogical innovations. Grigor Narekatsi was brought up and educated in this atmosphere. He became his father’s and his teacher’s heir and continued their work.

¹⁴ International conference on Armenian Medieval Literature, p. 66.

¹⁵ M. Mkryan, Grigor Narekatsi, Yerevan, 1955, p. 121.

¹⁶ Varag Arakelyan, Narekatsi’s language and style, Yerevan, 1975.

2. The Issue of Grigor Narekatsi's Trial

Little is known about Grigor Narekatsi's life and work. We know that he was Khosrov Andzevatsi's son; since childhood, he had been educated in the monastery of Narek under the tutelage of his uncle Anania Narekatsi, a prominent teacher of the time. He began to write when he was a youth. Being already popular due to his rich knowledge and unimpeachable conduct, Grigor had a serious order in 977; the king of Vaspurakan Gurgun offered him to write a commentary on *Song of Songs*. Grigor Narekatsi wrote speeches, coda-chants, lays but his masterpiece was his immortal poem *Book of Lamentations*; he died in 1003, a year after finishing it.

An interesting piece of information has come down to us. According to it, Grigor was accused of schism and was persecuted. High-ranking secular and religious figures of the time assembled in order to try him but, supposedly, he proved his innocence and sainthood by a miracle; in this way he avoided attending the trial: "The saint spared no effort for the unity of the church as the order in the holy church was shattered and neglected by sluggard and carnal clergymen. He wanted to reestablish and restore it. That is why brutal and cruel people spoke ill of him and considered him a schismatic. And assembling in a place, bishops and lords called him in order to try, to scold him publically and exile as a schismatic. And the envoys came to the saint to take him to the trial. Knowing this, the saint scolded them for senselessness and suggested that they should dine before going. He ordered to broil two pigeons and put them on their table. It was Friday. And that tempted the visitors to say: "Isn't it Friday today, Vardapet". And as if unaware of it, he answered: "Forgive me brothers; I did not know that it was a fasting day today". Then he said to the pigeons: "Get up and go, join your flock as it is a fasting day today". And on saying this, the pigeons came to life, got wings and flew up in the presence of everyone. They were dumbfounded to see that, and they fell down at the saint's feet, worshiped him and apologized.

They went and told everyone about the miracle, they gave up their evil wish and called him the Second Illuminator¹⁷ and Wonderworker¹⁸.

Prof. M. Mkryan rightfully marks that this miracle and many others, told in folk legends and epic songs about Narekatsi prove the historical veracity of the fact that he was persecuted by the official church. And if it is so, it is important to find out why the great thinker was persecuted. Narekatsi's freethinking, dissatisfaction with the reality, his emphasized mysticism enabled some circles of the clergy to accuse him of being a Tondrakian, though the poet did not consider

¹⁷ Saint Gregory the Illuminator is credited with converting Armenia from paganism to Christianity in 301.

¹⁸ Haysmavurk, 1706, p. 16.

himself a one and like his teacher he wrote against that movement. But the influence of many ideas of that movement on Narekatsi's worldview is obvious. The poet did not deny it himself; in Prayer 75 of his *Book of Lamentations* he wrote that he used to be fascinated with the evil ideas of that heresy too. Practically Narekatsi was really against the Tondrakian "extremisms" as he was educated at Narek School and was a representative of the current of moderate reformations. He was against destroying the churches and monasteries; as *Haysmavurk* (Menology) testified, he tried to reestablish and reform the church order corrupted and neglected by sluggard and carnal church leaders, to restore the fame of the church with some reformations, to draw the church, cut off and opposed to people, nearer to them again in order to strengthen their fading faith. By the way, the tenth-century historian Ukhtanes was concerned with that issue too, he was deeply influenced by Narek School. Apparently, this influence made the historian exclaim: "And blessed is the one who thinks of the poor and homeless: as he is accepted by God"

Like his father Khosrov Andzevatsi, Grigor Narekatsi was accused of being a tsayt, i.e. Chalcedonian, Orthodox, too, only because, as the most educated person of the time, he had a profound respect for the Greek culture and wanted to introduce some positive things of the neighboring Orthodox countries into the Armenian Church. Let us quote Khosrov Andzevatsi's words again: "If one of the Armenians adopts the canons of other nations, considering them true, he will be considered a tsayt, a schismatic, apostate. He will be mocked, persecuted and threatened with death".

The prominent historian Michael Chamchian said the following about Grigor Narekatsi: "He was considered a schismatic because he wanted to unite the Armenians under the patronage of other churches, Greek and Georgian, which were Chalcedonian and because he borrowed some innovations from them"¹⁹. One of those innovations that the "Moderates" wanted to borrow from the neighboring Orthodox churches was the usage of icons. Orbelyan wrote the following about the bishop of the province of Syunik, Vahan, who was elected Armenian Catholicos after Anania Mokatsi: "A year after being elected Catholicos, he began to bring icons from Georgia and put them on the altar. He ordered to do the same in all churches, to decorate altars with icons like the Greek and not to say the mass without icons. That's why everyone thought that he had concluded an alliance with the Greek and wanted to bring their sect into our church. People complained of him to the king. And the king ordered to convene a council in the city of Ani to clear up the

¹⁹ M. Chamchian, *Hayots Patmutyun* (Armenian History), volume 2, p. 1023. M. Chamchian perceives that "unity" differently, presenting the desired as reality; according to him Narekatsi had really adopted Chalcedon. However, the truth is that not being a Chalcedonian Narekatsi wanted to establish reconciliation among the neighboring Christian churches.

matter. Knowing it, Vahan did not attend the council, instead he went to the province of Vaspurakan to king Gagik's son Hamazasp and convinced him that he was slandered by envious people"²⁰.

Nerses Lambronatsi considered that Grigor Narekatsi was Catholicos Vahan's co-thinker²¹. What is interesting is that in the disputable Prayer 75 of his *Book of Lamentations* Narekatsi spoke of the importance of icons and marked that portraying the Mother of God was not impious.

If one were to consider her the image of the Mother

of God, it would not be impious.

Like the sign of the cross of salvation with amazing

powers and handiwork, it performs miracles.

The terrifying tribunal of the last judgment

is established there visibly.

Through her the babbling mouths of immoral heretics

are silenced. (Pr. 75, L)²²

As we see in this extract, Narekatsi gave reasons for the necessity of icons, in contrast to the Tondrakians who did not admit it at all.

Catholicos Vahan (as well as Khosrov Andzevatsi, Anania and Grigor Narekatsis) was not a Chalcedonian and considered such accusations as slander against him. This wing of the Armenian Reformation, represented by these figures, had a special attitude towards the-tenth-century Armenian-Chalcedonian relationships. The Armenian Monophysite reformers clearly saw and realized that religious disputes developed into political violence, interethnic clashes, antagonisms and weakened the neighboring Christian peoples, harmed their spiritual culture, economic and political unity, and all this was fraught with a great tragedy under the conditions of the common external threat. Only this can explain these people's aspiration and endeavor to ease the Armenian-Chalcedonian escalated relationships and end the interethnic clashes caused by that escalation. Thus, due to the work of the representatives of moderate reformations, with

²⁰ Stepanos Orbelyan, *Syuniqi patmutyun* (The History of Syuniq), Yerevan, 1986, p. 249-250.

²¹ M. Chamchian, *Hayots Patmutyun* (Armenian History), volume 2, Venice, 1785, p. 1024.

²² All the English extracts of Narekatsi's *Book of Lamentations* are taken from Thomas J. Samuelian's book *St. Grigor Narekatsi, Speaking with God from the Depth of my Heart*; the other extracts from poems, with the exception of one, are translated by the translator of this book.

their special attitude to the neighboring Dyophysite churches and peoples a new mentality, a new idea was formed in the medieval reality, the idea of religious tolerance and solidarity among nations. (As we see, the principle of the peaceful co-existence has a historical past). This idea was later developed in Mkhitar Gosh's and Vardan Aygektsi's works. "Making sure that it is impossible to come to a common conclusion over Christ's nature, Mkhitar Gosh and Vardan Aygektsi, 12th-13th-centuries' authors, who lived in different corners of the Armenian homeland (Gosh in Northern Armenia, dependent on Georgia, Vardan in Cilician Armenia), independently from each other but equally motivated by the same concern, made absolutely unique appeals having no precedent in the Christian world. These appeals were based on religious tolerance and the idea of solidarity among nations"²³.

Catholicos Vahan, as well as Grigor Narekatsi, striving for reconciliation with Chalcedonian churches, never had an intention to sacrifice the independence of the Armenian Church for that reconciliation. Catholicos Vahan was not personally interested in converting the Armenian Church to a Chalcedonian one, thereby making it dependent on the Byzantine Church. They tried to ease the escalated relationships with the neighboring churches on the basis of religious tolerance. Religious tolerance was one of the manifestations of Grigor Narekatsi's, the genius poet's and thinker's humanistic worldview. And this explains the fact why he wrote his *Book of Lamentations* for all Christian nations without any exception, not taking into account whether they were Monophysites or Dyophysites: ...*for the entire, mixed congregation of the Church universal* (Pr. 3, B). But naturally, Narekatsi's such position concerning the external political relationships of the Armenian Church could be and was qualified as a deviation from "the true faith" and was even regarded as a betrayal by conservatives, especially in the middle of the eighties of the 10th century, during a new stage of Byzantium's anti-Armenian policy.

That's why it was quite possible for the conservative clergy to want to try Narekatsi. Unfortunately, except *Haysmavurk*, no other book contains any concrete information about the trial. It is unknown where, when and under what circumstances the trial took place or whether it really took place or not. "We know nothing how Narekatsi managed to avoid attending the trial, or if he was present at the trial how he justified himself"²⁴.

The greatest part of the information concerning Narekatsi in *Haysmavurk* is true to fact. We have no reason not to believe that there was a trial and that bishops and lords had assembled to try Narekatsi. It is beyond doubt that this information is true though the fact of high-ranking

²³ "International conference of Armenian Medieval Literature, theses of reports", Yerevan, 1986, p. 148.

²⁴ M. Mkryan, *Grigor Narekatsi*, Yerevan, 1955, p. 122.

clergymen's and official's assembling for trying Narekatsi was in itself undesirable for the official church (even an attempt of trying a saint did not do credit to churchmen) anyway it is explicitly told in *Haysmavurk*. Why? Because the way of overcoming that unpleasant deadlock had been found beforehand: though high-ranking clergymen and officials assembled, St. Grigor Narekatsi was not tried, he proved his sainthood with his miracles and in this way seemingly the saint was not humiliated; his trial did not take place.

M. Chamchian has accepted the fact of the trial too; he has even specified the place and the date of the council: "Seeing the Armenians' disastrous isolation from the Greek because of the Council of Chalcedon, and knowing the truth about Catholicos Vahan's withdrawal to Vaspurakan, Grigor tried to reconcile our nation and the Chalcedonians of other nations to unite them around the Greek church and eliminate agitation, saying that deviations in the Armenian church order, even those of earlier times, should be corrected cautiously and carefully.

Learning about his good will from plotters, people looked askew at him and called him tsayt, i.e. as if his faith had diminished and he had become a heterodox. Moreover, after Catholicos Vahan's death some of illiterate people began to persecute him and accused him in the city of Ani of the Shirak province, then they set up a clamor, spread rumor until it became urgent to convene a council in Ani, in which Vardapets and lords were to participate, to discuss and examine the saint's works and thoughts and exile him in case they discovered he had deviated from the true faith"²⁵. Chamchian's sensitivity is striking and admirable; unfortunately, up to this day it is unknown on the basis of which sources he stated that the trial took place in Ani in 987 (he has marked the year 436 of Armenian chronology in the margin). Maybe this is the reason that the concrete information provided by M. Chamchian has not yet been appreciated at true value in Philology and is not being discussed even now²⁶. But if we compare this important information given by Chamchian with the historical events in the middle of the eighties of the 10th century, it becomes obvious that the merited Armenologist's information is not groundless, on the contrary, it is quite trustworthy and reliable.

Byzantium always presented its expansionist policy as a rightful struggle for "true faith". In the 10th century Byzantine emperors carried out an anti-Armenian policy, deriving benefit from doctrinal discords. Thus in 30-40ies of the 10th century, after the Emperor Romanos' persecutions, the Armenian-Chalcedonian relations became comparatively peaceful. But in 986 there started a new wave of violence against the Armenian Monophysites. The Armenian

²⁵ M. Chamchyan, *Patmutyun* (History), volume 2, p. 852.

²⁶ With the exception of a 19th-century philologist Barsegh Sagsyan's work, *Study of the Manichaean-Paulician-Tondrakian sect and Gr. Narekatsi's epistle*.

prominent historian – Asoghik told interesting facts about it: “Both abbesses and the metropolitan of Sebastia began to oppress the Armenians because of their faith. They acted violently towards priests. The chief priest of the city of Sebastia was taken to the palace in iron chains. Priest Gabriel was tortured and killed in prison because he was a wise elderly man, firm in his faith. All this happened in 986. Forced by metropolitan, non-prominent priests Sion and Hovhanness, the two bishops of Sebastia (Sivas) and Larisso respectively, accepted the Chalcedonian creed. They were left out of the Armenian congregation, and then the Armenians of Sebastia turned their backs on them, too, until King Basil’s arrival in the Eastern Armenia. Then the metropolitans began to write urgent letters to the Armenian Catholicos Lord Khachik, and the above mentioned Vardapets answered them courageously”²⁷. Matteos Urhayetsi (Mathew of Edessa), an eleventh-century historian, wrote in this concern: “The patriarch of the Greeks, Theodore, whose seat was the capital Melitene, who was a profound thinker, competent in Holy Scriptures, wrote a letter to him (Catholicos Khachik-S.P.). Armenian Vardapet Samvel answered him decently and politely. The whole audience liked his letter; that is why he (Samvel) began to be held in high respect both by patriarch Theodore and the Armenian Catholicos Khachik”²⁸. It should be assumed from this information that a council was called in Ani or Argina, Catholicos Khachik Arsharuni’s residence, in 987, to discuss the issues of the mentioned events and the measures to take to strengthen the Armenian Church. We can infer from Urhayetsi’s statement “the whole audience liked his letter” that Samvel Kamrjadzoretsi’s response letter to the Byzantine bishop was discussed at that council too. It might be the very council where Grigor Narekatsi, accused of being a “tsayt”, had to undergo inquisition. Narekatsi’s opponents used the moment to defame him in the presence of Catholicos Khachik Arsharuni. In that period of the inflammation of anti-Byzantine passions, even a slight doubt was enough to be cruelly tried by the church.

Accepting the fact of trial as a historical event, let us move on to the question of whether Narekatsi attended the trial or not.

In order to clear up this matter, it is necessary to take into account the nature of the ideological struggle in the second half of the 10th century and Narekatsi’s place in that struggle. Though it may seem impudent, the researcher should put himself in Grigor’s place. Not attending the trial would mean to confirm all the accusations against him. And in the result of it Narekatsi would be persecuted, imprisoned and exiled as a schismatic. And if not during his life, surely after his death, all the works that were the meaning of his life would be destroyed. Today the mankind

²⁷ Stepanos Taronetsi Asoghik, *Patmautyun Tiezerakan* (The Universal History), Petersburg, 1985, p. 201.

²⁸ Matteos Urhayetsi, *Zhamankagrutiun* (Chronicle), Yerevan, 1973, pp. 25-26.

would not have the immortal monument *Book of Lamentations*, the creative foundations of which the poet had already laid at the time. Consequently, Narekatsi would be removed from church and would have to come out of the social-political arena, in general; it was something that was not included in the great poet's creative and practical plans at all. As it is mentioned in *Haysmavurk*, though it comes as a surprise, Narekatsi never sought to be detached from the church and join the Tondrakians. He had a task to strengthen the shaken foundations of the Armenian Church and ease the tension in Armenian-Chalcedonian relationship. He had to do a lot to achieve the goal. Anyway, he did not have another alternative. The great thinker took that step, knowing that all the other ways would prove to be in vain. It would be naive to try to persuade church leaders in the great necessity of reformations once more because even Vahan Syunetsi did not manage to do it when he was a Catholicos.

Narekatsi probably attended the council convened to try him. He was accused, reproached but managed to justify himself. However striking it may seem, the fact that *Haysmavurk* denied Narekatsi's appearing before the court is the very proof of his attending the trial. Unfortunately, accepting the fact of the trial the prominent historian M. Chamchian repeated the legend in *Haysmavurk* that Narekatsi avoided the trial by a miracle.

3. How did Grigor Narekatsi Justify Himself?

It is clear that Narekatsi would not appear before the court empty-handed. He might have taken a work confirming his orthodoxy with him. In the Middle Ages it was accepted that an accused person could justify himself with a writing, deny the accusations against himself, prove his innocence and if he had been mechanically fascinated with some inadmissible ideas, he had to confess it with a confession letter and come to orthodoxy again as Anania Narekatsi had to write his *Confession Letter* on the brink of death".

This hypothesis, that Narekatsi appeared before the court and justified himself by a work confirming his orthodoxy, was put forward by the philologist B. Sargsyan already at the end of the 19th century. Narekatsi wrote his well-known letter to the head of the monastery of Kchav in relation to the trial: "Even Grigor Narekatsi, the aroma of whose sainthood delights us like a sweet incense and fills the heart of every Armenian with joy even after nine centuries, did not

evade their accusation until he wrote an epistle on his creed, despite the fact that Armenian historians credit him with the miraculous rebirth and flying of roasted pigeons”²⁹.

His anti-Tondrakian, anti-Chalcedonian letter to the head of the Kchav monastery was an excellent means to defend himself against assaults and accusations. The survival of that letter is already an interesting and conspicuous fact. It is hardly probable that the clergy of the Kchav monastery would preserve that accusatory epistle; however, it has come down to us. Moreover, it was included in the official collection of *Girk Tghtos (Book of Letters)* of the Armenian Church. Doesn't the fact of the letter against the Kchav monastery being included in such an authoritative collection attest that a copy of the letter (we repeat that the original would hardly survive) somehow appeared at the Catholicate where it was included in the collection of *Girk Tghtos*? Couldn't the author, Grigor, himself take the copy to the Catholicos?

What brings us to that idea? First of all, the very reason of writing the epistle. In this concern B. Sargsyan has interesting remarks in his work, *Study of the Manichaeian-Paulician-Tondrakian sect and Gr. Narekatsi's epistle*. Sargsyan wrote the following about the real motive of writing the letter: “It should be noted that in 987 even the purest of abbots were accused of being Tondrakians' co-thinkers because of the sect of the hypocrite Tondrakians. Saint Grigor was among those whom enemies considered as a tsayt, i.e. apostate, too. A council of prominent Vardapets and lords was convened in the city of Ani, royal residence, to examine the matter; Grigor was found innocent. But as not everyone knew about it he had to write letters to different people, in which, however, he did not write his creed”³⁰. B. Sargsyan related the writing of the epistle to the council convened to try Narekatsi; according to him (anyhow he himself hinted at it), Narekatsi had written his epistle not because he was much concerned with the fact that the clergymen of Kchav monastery were fond of or adhered to Tondrakians. In writing that letter Narekatsi had another intention: the creation of such a document which, when needed, would be used as proof of its author's orthodoxy or innocence. (It is obvious that the real purpose of the letter was this, concluding from the fact that the clergymen of Kchav monastery were accused of being Tondrakians by someone who himself had been accused of the same thing).

It is noteworthy that, according to B. Sargsyan, Narekatsi chose a strange way to prove his innocence: instead of speaking about and grounding his orthodoxy and his faithfulness to the “true faith” in his letter, he assaulted the clergymen of Kchav monastery, accusing them of being

²⁹ B. Sargsyan, *Study of the Manichaeian-Paulician-Tondrakian sect and Gr. Narekatsi's epistle*, Venice, 1983, p. 74.

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 106-107.

Tondrakians. And writing even the details of the ideology of that movement, he anathematized and cursed its followers.

Apparently, Narekatsi did not choose the monastery of Kchav as a target by accident. Taking into consideration the following lines of Narekatsi's letter "...that orders to curse them in his writings and considers our Lord Anania's amazing objection-letter as a filthy talk", B. Sargsyan noted: "Judging from Grigor's words the abbot of the monastery of Kchav had evidently spoken or acted against Anania Narekatsi. On the one hand, the abbot had come to an agreement with the Tondrakians, and on the other hand, had led some of the sober-minded into temptation. It can be concluded from Kchav abbot's objection against Anania Narekatsi, if it is true, that either the monasteries of Kchav and Narek were rivals in the 10th century or the abbot of Kchav monastery really wanted to disseminate the Tondrakian sect in his congregation"³¹.

There is no doubt about the opposition of these two monasteries. The clergy of Kchav monastery might have accused Anania Narekatsi of being not sincere enough in his well-known writing against the Tondrakians that gave the Catholicos an opportunity to make the dying Anania Narekatsi write his *Confession Letter*. Moreover, the assaults and rumors of the clergymen of Kchav might have been redirected against Grigor Narekatsi, after Anania Narekatsi's death. Maybe, the clergy of Kchav had spoken ill of the great poet to the Catholicos.

Under the conditions of an uncompromising ideological struggle, persecutions and pressures, one has to use the opponent's weapon against him. Taking the chance that a certain Mushegh, who probably preached some of the ideas of the Tondrakian movement, had been living in Kchav monastery for some time, Narekatsi wrote his epistle addressed to the clergy of Kchav in a way as if he was much concerned with Mushegh's being accepted in Kchav and that the clergymen liked him. Maybe the clergymen of Kchav were not Tondrakians at all and Narekatsi was just taking revenge on them. Had the clergymen of Kchav justified themselves and proved their innocence, Narekatsi would state that he had just heard such kind of news and was suspicious that's why he had offered the abbot of the monastery of Kchav to anathematize the Tondrakians in writing, too. Thus, the question would be clarified and the both sides satisfied.

Narekatsi's epistle has been viewed differently in Armenian studies. Some of the investigators even considered it as a proof of Narekatsi's being extremely reactionary (Leo, A. Hovhannisyan). The proponents of this view have not taken into account the historical conditions and circumstances and the real motives of writing that *Epistle*. Narekatsi was not a Tondrakian. He was against the "radical" manifestations of that movement but at the same time he was

³¹ Ibid., p. 108.

deeply affected by some of the ideas of that movement. His *Book of Lamentations* is perhaps the mirror of those ideas. Narekatsi was a “moderate” reformer. This was the reason of his special attitude towards the Tondrakians (members of the most revolutionary movement) on the one hand, and towards conservatives, on the other hand. Anyway, we should not forget that Narekatsi was the great figure and ideologist of the Armenian Reformation. Thus, though he did adhere to the Tondrakians but was much closer to them than to the conservatives.

If we go far in comparisons, we should say that Narekatsi was Martin Luther of the Armenian reality. Luther’s great creative deed was the translation of Holy Writ into German during the nationalization process of Christianity. And, in the Armenian reality the creation of *Book of Lamentations* by Narekatsi was such a great creative deed.

Grigor Narekatsi’s letter against the clergy of Kchav monastery was a kind of “practical” evidence of its author’s innocence. It could attest that its author had acted against sectarians, but in the letter, he attacked the clergy of Kchav rather than defended himself. B. Sargsyan rightly marked that the author had not written about his faith, as it was accepted in Middle Ages, for his contemporaries to know whether he had deviated from the foundations of faith or not. That is to say Narekatsi might have taken some other writing, besides that letter – a “theoretical” evidence of his orthodoxy, in which he must have written his creed. In my opinion, the unity of the disputable prayers of Narekatsi’s *Book of Lamentations* could be such a work. Taking into consideration the very words of the author, I conventionally name it *Havatoy Sahmank* (Profession of Faith). Written in a rhetorical style and being religious in content, Prayers 34, 75, 92, 93 of Narekatsi’s *Book of Lamentations* were initially the entire work in which Narekatsi presented the foundations of the doctrine of the Armenian Church, showing his negative attitude towards almost all the deviations of the time from those foundations.

Apparently, those prayers were directed not only against the Tondrakians but also against Dyophysites as is obvious from the fact that one of the citations of famous Vardapets in Vardan Aygektsi’s collection of *Armat Havatoy* (Roots of Faith) has been taken from the very disputable Prayer 75 of Narekatsi’s *Book of Lamentations*:

...reverently loving the Father,

whose likeness he bears...

humbled itself and descended to earth,

without diminishing its inherent glory,

*to enter the maternal womb of the immaculate Virgin,
Mother of God, in whom he grew the seeds of blessings
in that radiant field of purity. (Pr. 75, E)*

These Prayers have caused scientific hot discussions. Disputable points include the question of their authorship, whether they were initially in the *Book of Lamentations* or not, the question of their premeditation and so on³².

Thoroughly considering these issues in his monograph, M. Mkryan came to the conclusion that “either Narekatsi was not the author of the non-poetic Prayers 92, 93, as well as 75 and the last parts of some other Prayers at all, or if he had ever written them, he had composed them independently from his poem for other purposes, and later scribes mixed those Prayers and parts with the text of the poem for certain reasons”. The valuable study of manuscripts, recently conducted by P. Khachatryan and A. Ghazinyan, enables us to leave out doubts and say with certainty that Grigor and no one else is the author of these Prayers, and they have initially been in the *Book of Lamentations*³³. In this concern, the bibliographers have written, “Is Narekatsi or somebody else the author of these prayers? Could they be written by his brother Hovhannes?” There are no reasons to attribute the manuscripts to somebody else. We think that the author’s mention of his brother’s collaboration does not refer to Hovhannes’ creative help but copying and editorial assistance. Narekatsi does not give a hint of not being the author of these Prayers”³⁴.

Accepting that these disputable Prayers initially constituted a part of the *Book of Lamentations*, there arises some controversial situation; if Narekatsi is their author why are they different from the other Prayers not only stylistically but also in content? (We will consider this difference separately below).

M. Kheranyan and V. Gevorgyan solved that discrepancy by regarding Narekatsi as not the author of those prayers. M. Kheranyan wrote: “Prayers 75, 92, 93 wholly, as well as separate parts in Prayers 33, 34 and 36 are of only doctrinal and religious-philosophical character, and in my opinion, these Prayers, being stylistically and spiritually different from the whole poem, can hardly belong to the genius poet’s pen”³⁵.

³² M. Mkryan, “Grigor Narekatsi”, Yerevan, 1955, pp. 174-177.

³³ Grigor Narekatsi, Matyan Oghbergutean, ed. P. M. Khachatryan and A. A. Ghazinyan, Yerevan, 1985, notes, pp. 973-1122.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 1112.

³⁵ Grigor Narekatsi, Matyan Oghbergutean, translated from Grabar by Mkrtich Kheranyan, Yerevan, 1960, p. 34.

However, the studies of the manuscripts give no reason to doubt that Narekatsi was the author of those prayers.

P. Khachatryan and A. Ghazinyan tried to solve that controversy mainly in the following way: "The fact that Prayers 33 and 34 as well as some parts in Prayers 75, 92, 93 have a religious-doctrinal content, special titles and subtitles, and violate the general lyrical-emotional mood of the poem cannot be a sound argument to take these Prayers out of the *Book of Lamentations*, moreover, to consider them as not Narekatsi's work. These Prayers make Narekatsi's worldview complete, expressing his religious mentality, the narrow-mindedness of that epoch and the profound influence of the church ideology and theological scholasticism"³⁶.

As we see, they have solved the controversy by considering the disputable Prayers as supplementing and concretizing the content of the other Prayers (in these Prayers Narekatsi has enlarged and gone into the details of the Creed of the Nicene Council in 325), i.e. these Prayers are viewed as an expression of Narekatsi's ideological beliefs. The following citation confirms that: "Narekatsi's position taken in behalf of the church and against the people who defame it, is distinct here (in Prayer 75). According to Narekatsi, to neglect the order, mystery of the church is the same as to raise hand against God: *...raises a hand in malice against the heavenly kingdom*"³⁷.

Khachatryan and Ghazinyan saw the solution of the issue this way: "Proving that the author of these Prayers is Narekatsi, we should accept that their content is not alien to him. On the contrary, they constitute a part of his ideological beliefs, hence the composition of these Prayers was initially a part of Narekatsi's ideological-creative plans of writing the poem, and these Prayers were not composed "independently from his poem and for other purposes".

Such an approach does not take into account the fact that the disputable Prayers differ from the other Prayers of the poem not only stylistically but also in content and even with regard to religious-doctrinal questions, moreover, they have been written from different perspectives of the tenth-century ideological struggle but by the same person.

M. Mkryan was right considering that Narekatsi "had created the disputable Prayers independently from his poem and for other purposes..." The celebrated philologist saw the reasons of their creation very well. "...Even if we consider that these prayers (they mostly refer to the Nicene Creed) were written by Narekatsi, who was accused of being a Tondrakian and was persecuted for it, all the same it is impossible to imagine that such a genius poet like him would disturb the purposeful structure of his poem with religious prosaic "insertions" two or three

³⁶ Grigor Narekatsi, Matyan Oghbergutean, ed. P. M. Khachatryan and A. A. Ghazinyan, Yerevan, 1985, p. 186.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 153.

times”³⁸. But why not? Isn’t it possible that the great poet, whatever his purpose of writing these prayers was (securing himself from accusations), had to include them in his poem because of the above-mentioned reasons, in order to ensure the future existence of his poem...?

* * *

Prayer 75 is pivotal among Narekatsi’s religious-doctrinal Prayers (34, 75, 92, 93): it unites the other prayers around itself. That pivotal Prayer, with its D-F parts, referring to the creed of the Holy Trinity, is related to Prayer 34 and with its parts referring to the special interpretation of the mystery of the physical church, it is connected with Prayers 92, 93. Thus, these disputable Prayers comprise an entity. The thing that before being included in the *Book of Lamentations* they had been a separate work, and that Narekatsi had written them independently from his *Book of Lamentations* is apparent from the fact that they have been written with a common aim—the whole work referring to the doctrine of the Armenian Church. What is the ideological aim that unites the disputable Prayers in an entity? Narekatsi was undoubtedly aware of what, in particular, he had been charged with: the first point concerned the mystery of the Holy Trinity and the question of Christ’s nature, closely connected with it. Narekatsi was accused of being Dyophysites’ co-thinker; the Armenian Monophysites called Dyophysites man-worshippers (Nestorians) which meant considering the Son subject to the Father, not accepting that the Holy Trinity is of one nature and consubstantial. Secondly, he was accused of derogating the role of the church, neglecting it (that came from Narekatsi’s mysticism and was one of the significant merits of his *Book of Lamentations*). Thirdly, he was accused of attempting to neglect, to look down upon the symbolism of the church. In the disputable Prayers Narekatsi tried to reject the accusations against him point to point, justify himself and prove his faithfulness to the doctrine of the Armenian official church. In fact, this was the general idea, the aim of writing these Prayers.

* * *

A. The comparative analysis of the disputable and other lyrical Prayers indicates that they are different not only in regard to their linguistic-stylistic peculiarities but also in respect to their nature, content or as Mkryan has more precisely noted, “in regard to the nature of the content”. Apparently, the disputable Prayers are religious-doctrinal; although such kinds of problems are touched upon in almost all the Prayers of the *Book of Lamentations*, their difference becomes obvious at first glance: due to the possibility of the multiple interpretation of the poetic discourse doctrinal issues are presented in diversity of their solutions, sometimes in logically opposite

³⁸ M. Mkryan, *Grigor Narekatsi*, p. 175.

interpretations in the lyrical Prayers which is the result of the author's creative ease, free-thinking, as well as the result of disobedience to the blind faith and dogmatism of the church that makes the reader think over the raised problems freely. In contrast to them, the disputable Prayers are one-sided and boring. From this standpoint, q (c), ȳ (d), ȳ (e), q (f), ȳ (g) parts of Prayer 34 are closer to the lyrical Prayers. Presumably, Narekatsi composed them while inserting the *Havatoy Sahmank* (Profession of Faith) in the *Book of Lamentations*. This conclusion is drawn from the fact that these parts of Prayer 34 and the parts ȳ (d), ȳ (e), q (f) of Prayer 75, though touch upon the same topic are essentially different from each other; the parts of Prayer 34 are richer in content and can have multiple interpretations, in contrast to the above-mentioned parts of Prayer 75. Besides, it is hardly possible for two narrations on the same issue (the nature of the Holy Trinity) to be in same work, *Profession of Faith*. That is why it is considered that the mentioned parts of Prayer 75 (which are closer to the doctrine of the church and comprise less judgments of the author) were taken from the *Profession of Faith* and they were immediately followed by ȳ (h) ȳ (i) parts of Prayer 34.

B. Glorifying God in the lyrical Prayers, relating man's salvation directly to God, Narekatsi really neglected the church and its attributes. Moreover, there was a discrimination on his part as to the persons of the Holy Trinity, he emphasized the Son more, and what is most striking, even Godhead was derogated sometimes, while in the disputable Prayers, on the contrary, Narekatsi strictly followed the requirements of the religious dogmatism, displaying his competence of the Holy Book, and most importantly the great role of the church in man's salvation was emphasized there.

C. As we have already mentioned, bibliographers P. Khachatryan and A. Ghazinyan thought that the disputable Prayers had been in the *Book of Lamentations* from the beginning, and in order to prove it, they cited some parts from these Prayers to show that these were the inseparable parts of the *Book of Lamentations* and "had been written for it". Agreeing with the opinion that these Prayers had been in the book since the moment of its creation, however, I think that they had been written much earlier than the *Book of Lamentations* and "independently from his poem and for other purposes". They were not "mixed up with the text of the poem" by scribes after his death, the author himself inserted those Prayers into the poem during the process of the creation of the *Book of Lamentations*, for some reasons. For this purpose, the author made substantial editorial attempts to "tie" the disputable Prayers to the lyrical ones.

Thus, the author composed and inserted the following part at the beginning of Prayer 34:

*Here is my profession of faith, here,
the yearnings of my wretched breath to you
who constitute all things with your Word, God.
What I have discoursed upon before, I set forth again,
these written instructions and interpretations
for the masses of different nations.
I offer these Prayers of intercession
in the thanksgiving Prayer below.*

In this way, Prayer 34 was tied to Prayer 33. Having worded the doctrine of the Holy Trinity of the Nicene Creed the poet wrote:

*Now, I offer to your all-hearing ears, almighty God,
the secret thoughts in this book,
and thus equipped, I venture forth in conversation,
not with the idea that my voice could
somehow exalt you,
for before you created everything,
before the creation of the heavens
with the immortal choir of praise and
the earthly thinking beings,
you yourself in your perfection were already glorified,
but still you permit me, a reject, to taste
your indescribable sweetness, through
the communion of words.
And what good is it to mouth your*

royal command about

“Adonai, Lord,” and not carry it out.

I destroyed with my own hand

the golden tables of speech,

dedicated to your message, written by

the finger of God.

That was true destruction.

And I, with ashen-faced sorrow,

now provide a second copy, made in its likeness.

But now, since I have prayed much,

in a voice of passionate and sincere praise,

hear me, compassionate God, with this

profession of faith.

May the voice of this Prayer be joined with those offered

by clean worshipers obedient to your will

so that this meager offering, a dry loaf of

unleavened bread,

might be served with oil upon your altar of glory.

This part is a very important link too. In this respect, Khachatryan and Ghazinyan noted: “In Prayers 33 and 34 Narekatsi mainly writes about his credo, his profession. It requires a different style, different order and a different technique. In other words, these lines have not been written with tears of tremulous complaints and regrets, and the poet turns to God to accept together with the profession of his faith those many Prayers which are said with passionate praises: *in a voice of passionate and sincere praise* (Pr. 34, J)”³⁹. It is obvious that the author tries to connect the

³⁹ Grigor Narekatsi, Matyan Oghbergutean, ed. P. M. Khachatryan and A. A. Ghazinyan, Yerevan, 1985, notes, pp. 1042-1043.

non-poetic Prayer 34 to the poetic ones. Moreover, in the above-mentioned part the poet tries to secure his lyrical poems delicately, “under the patronage” of that doctrinal Prayer, thereby ensuring the future existence of his compositions. The proof of this is the fact that instead of asking the Almighty to accept and perceive “this” writing (Prayer 34) together with the previous ones the great poet asks quite the contrary, to accept the others with this one...

For Prayer 75, parts *uu* (a) and *p* (b) are the “ties”. Part *uu* (a) is of special importance. Khachatryan and Ghazinyan thought that Prayer 75 had been written for the poem, too, and not independently from it. In this concern, they wrote: “G. Avetiqyan believes that this Prayer should have been placed after Prayer 34 as the latter is devoted to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity according to Nicene Creed, and this Prayer to the mystery of the church doctrine according to Apostolic and Constantinopolitan Creeds... It is a mere logical conclusion, not a grounded argument. Narekatsi regards the church as Christ’s pure body, which should be worshiped equally with its head, i.e. the incarnate Word of God – Christ, and he has written this Prayer also mentioning his speech (Prayer 34) devoted to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. According to Narekatsi, the church is the true and glorious mother (i.e. the basis) of the believer’s spiritual birth. It is impossible to cleanse oneself of sins, communicate with saints and be worthy of the heavenly salvation without it, that is he considers it necessary to word his profession of both the Holy Trinity and especially of church in an explanatory way in his *Book of Lamentations*”⁴⁰. Certainly, there is no need to put Prayer 75 immediately after Prayer 34 in the poem, but the sound fact that Prayer 75 is the logical continuation of Prayer 34 cannot be denied which indicates that these Prayers were really created independently from the poem and before being inserted in the poem, they had been a single whole, a separate piece of poetry. As the author himself inserted the disputable Prayers in his poem (in my opinion), moreover in the process of the creation of the poem, there is no need to raise the question of taking these Prayers out of the poem or changing their place. However, philology has to discover the history and purpose of their creation in order to be objective during their assessment and evaluation.

As to Prayers 92 and 93, they are almost irrelevant to the contexture of the poem. All this indicates that the disputable Prayers were really created independently from the poem and before the creation of the poem had been a separate piece of poetry with a solid structure of the content.

* * *

The disputable Prayers of the *Book of Lamentations* are anti-sectarian in content.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 1089.

As it has already been said, these Prayers convey the essence of the doctrine of the Armenian Church: 1) the concept of God, 2) the sacrament of the church, 3) symbols of the Armenian Church... That is to say, Narekatsi wrote the foundations and the roots of the faith of the Armenian Church in these Prayers, assuring that they were his personal convictions too.

They used to accuse Narekatsi of being a schismatic, sectarian, tsayt, Tondrakian, Paulican, Manichaeen. The movement of the Armenian Reformation was a unity of different ideological currents. Currents of any type, opposed to the Armenian official church, were equally considered enemies of the official church and formed the opposition front. Here we have the same picture as during the German Reformation: the fighting wing of the Armenian Reformation (headed by Smbat Zahrevantsi, i.e. T. Munzer of the Armenian reality) set the problem of radical reforms, and the proponents of moderate reforms tried to simplify the church hierarchy, reform and enliven church rituals and order. Narekatsi was charged with three pivotal points of the ideology of the Reformation movement – the mighty, anti-feudal, anti-church movement in medieval Armenia. These were the points: a) deliberate distortion of the concept of God, tangling the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, overestimation of Christ's saving role, generally preferring the Son to the other members of the Holy Trinity – the Father and the Holy Spirit. Narekatsi made a special emphasis on Christ's philanthropy, closeness to the human, earthliness, which was viewed as a deviation towards Chalcedon. And this was not all; emphasizing the human nature of the Son, Narekatsi also glorified the human much, even divinizing and worshipping the human (not only God is human but also the human is God). In short, Narekatsi could easily be accused of anthropolatry and even of atheism and fighting against God. b) and c) Narekatsi was accused of neglecting the church, its order and symbols. He was accused of being the Tondrakians' co-thinker, "the sects, being diverse and many, were known by different names, Manicheans, Paulicians or Pavlikians, etc. They despised the church, and mocked everything that was done in the church"⁴¹.

And thus in the *Profession of Faith* or in the disputable Prayers Narekatsi tried to reject all these accusations, writing the viewpoint of the official church, concerning these key points and particularly emphasizing his "negative" attitude and "intolerance" against any kind of deviation. And this was done by Grigor Narekatsi, the author of the *Book of Lamentations*, a man who preferred logical thinking to blind faith, a thinker who respected all the possible more or less reasonable viewpoints, and suddenly he was displaying such a one-sided and abrupt approach.

⁴¹ G. Avetiqyan, *Narekaluts* (Analysis of the Narek), p. 382.

Committing the Nicene Creed to paper, Narekatsi forbade deviations from it and he threatened the deviators:

*But if one presumes in a refutation
to snatch the Father from his Word,
on the ground that there was a time when the Word was not,
believing that such speculations exalt the sublime greatness of the divine,
or if one subordinates the Spirit which proceeds forth
on the ground that it is not spiritual by nature
thereby introducing an alien being or unstable mixture
into the pure and sublime unity of the Holy Trinity,
we must reject such persons from our midst.

We must drive them away in disgrace
with the confession of faith
like a stoning of fierce demons or vicious beasts,
cast a curse on their devilish lot,
and shut the gates to the church of life in their face.

While we glorify the Holy Trinity in the same lordship of united equality,
In parallel praise and uniform level,
blessed on earth and in heaven,
in the congregation of the nation of earthly thinking beings,
now and forever. (Pr. 34, J).*

“Grounding” the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and the inadmissibility of deviations from this doctrine, Narekatsi passed on to the interpretation of the mystery and order of the church. Khachatryan and Ghazinyan wrote: “Narekatsi meant the believers by saying the spiritual church, and by physical church he meant the temple which was to be worshiped not as a material

building, as it would be sectarianism, but as God's home; a sanctuary, a door which led to the Kingdom of Heaven. According to Narekatsi, the sacrament of the church was different from the sacrament of the temple. Cults were worshiped in temples, God the almighty was worshiped in church. The worship of Christian God destroyed the worship of idols, opposing the faith of the Holy Trinity to polytheism. Narekatsi rejected the Paulician and Tondrakian views, according to which churches were nothing more than a transformation of pagan temples⁴².

Not only the Tondrakians but also Dyophysites were criticized in Narekatsi's interpretation of the sacrament of church. Probably some ideological features, common for Tondrakians and Dyophysites, were indicated in it. In medieval Armenia, the official church reproached both the Tondrakians and Chalcedonians as man worshipers and materialists. Narekatsi's criticism of the Tondrakians was directed against Dyophysites at the same time. In both cases, the great thinker tried to assure that he was not a man worshiper, he worshiped God. That way Narekatsi ensured himself from accusations of being a tsayt and Tondrakian.

Narekatsi interpreted church symbols, the sacrament of the bell-ringer's stick, Chrism, icons, etc. the same way, too. This is a common feature, which was developed in the disputable Prayers of the *Narek*. Thus, according to Narekatsi's logic if someone considered icons, Chrism, the bell-ringer's stick, church buildings only material, such a person considered Christ a human only and not God, which meant the rejection of the Holy Trinity at the same time:

*And woe to him who raises a hand in malice
against the kingdom of heaven as if
the doctrine of the church were made by a man
were some physical invention
of human artifact or earthly handiwork,
and not the gift of life and reflection of the divine,
a foreshadow of the renewing light revealed by the Holy Spirit,
and the abundant gifts of God on high,
the altar honoring the sacrament of the will of the creator,*

⁴² Grigor Narekatsi, Matyan Oghbergutean, ed. by P. M. Khachatryan and A. A. Ghazinyan, Yerevan, 1985, notes, pp. 1091, 1093.

*and the institution founded with wisdom by the righteous hand of apostles,
in a word, the gate of heaven,
the city of living God,
the mother of all living things, free of all sin,
and the true model of our visible, thinking being.
Her intellectual part is the mystery of our souls.
Her palpable part is the image of our bodies.
And a new holiness surpassing the holiness of the old
and crowned with the brilliantly glorious sign of Christ,
those who do not confess this
are expelled from the Almighty's presence
by the hand of his consubstantial Word,
depriving them from the inheritance of grace
from the co-glorified Holy Spirit,
and closing before them the doors to the bridal chamber of life.
And we who have written this bear witness to it
and believe in what we have composed here,
in the name of and for the glory of the almighty Holy trinity
and of one Godhead,
forever and ever. (Pr. 75, M)*

It is obvious that while composing the disputable Prayers Narekatsi displayed a special attitude. In order to reject the accusations of neglecting the significance and the role of the church, assigned to him, the author glorified the church. He had a reason for it; as we know, Narekatsi had been educated in church since childhood, and in order not to be called an “ungrateful son”, the poet praised and exalted the church, considering it the true and glorious mother of every

believer's spiritual birth, mother without whom it was impossible to cleanse oneself of sins and be worthy of the kingdom of heaven (see Prayer 75, parts Է (g), ը (h), ք (i), ժ (J) and other parts).

The unity of the disputable Prayers of Narekatsi's *Book of Lamentations*, with its ideological content, style, spirit, even the author's tone and "attitude" and, most importantly, with its anti-Chalcedonian orientation, is the paraphrase of Narekatsi's "Epistle" against the Tondrakians. And the issues and topics discussed in both of them have something in common with the response letters written to the bishops of Sebastia and Melitene. Thus, there is a considerable basis for assuming that before being included in the *Book of Lamentations*, the disputable Prayers were a single work which was taken to Ani or Argina, and due to which Narekatsi was able to justify himself during the trial. The great poet, like the great Galilee, outwardly, partially retreated from his ideological positions but only in the purpose of avoiding anathema and exile, in order to be able to continue his innovative activity. The following words by Narekatsi can be considered as a direct hint of Narekatsi's temporary retreat and, in general, of the story concerning the trial:

For although at times

I was ensnared and lured away

and expelled from Paradise

by heretical doctrines, devices of the Deceiver,

now by this true doctrine in upright purity,

as a token of true grace

again on wings of light

I ascend in pursuit of heaven. (Pr. 75, A)

These words should be regarded as strictly autobiographical because they are not a lyrical generalization to arouse doubt. This confession is already a proof that the disputable Prayers were written because of the trial.

It becomes clear from all this why the work *Profession of Faith* did not survive in the Catholicos's Archives and even was not mentioned by later scribes, while Grigor Narekatsi's Epistle to the clergy of the monastery of Kchav survived in its original form, being included in

the *Book of Letters* (Girk Tghtos). The *Profession of Faith* could not survive as an individual work, probably because later the author himself took that work from the Catholicos's Archives and inserted it into the *Book of Lamentations*. Maybe, Samuel Anetsi hinted this very fact in a piece of information, which seems insignificant at first glance: "At that time, bishop Andzevatsi's son, the great and universal Vardapet Grigor Narekatsi, composed his book there"⁴³. Apparently, several years later after the trial, undertaking the composition of the Book, Narekatsi went to Ani where the Catholicos's residence was at that time, (it had been moved from Argina to Ani during Catholicos Sargis Anetsi's term of office) and taking the *Profession of Faith* from the Archives dissolved it into his *Book of Lamentations*...

4. Ukhtanes and Grigor Narekatsi

The historian Ukhtanes's connection with the monastery of Narek, the mystery of the meeting of Ukhtanes and the Vardapet who ordered him to write his *History* and some notable coincidences and parallels make us put forward the following hypothesis:

Ukhtanes wrote his *History* at the request of Grigor Narekatsi.

The tenth-century historian – Ukhtanes told in the first part of Chapter One of his *History of Armenians* (this part being the preface of his work) that he had written his work, particularly the second part, subtitled *History of the Severance of the Georgians from the Armenians*, the most valuable part as he himself called it, at the request of a Vardapet of the monastery of Narek. Narekatsi's name was not specifically mentioned anywhere in the text. It was mentioned only in the titles: "History in three parts, written by Lord Ukhtanes, bishop of Sebastia, at the request of Father Anania, the abbot of the monastery of Narek and the preeminent Vardapet"; "A reply to Anania's letter and my promise to fulfill his request"⁴⁴.

But it is known that these titles had not been written by the author; they were added by scribes of later periods which was done either by mistake or deliberately. Thus, traditionally there dominated a belief in Armenian studies that Ukhtanes had written his *History* at the request of Anania Narekatsi. Among scholars of Armenian studies, only P. Peters was skeptical about this viewpoint, doubting its truthfulness, however he ran to another extreme. Denying that point of

⁴³Samuel Anetsi, *Havaqmuk i grots Patmagrats* (Chronicle), Vagharshapat, 1893, p. 104.

⁴⁴Ukhtanes, *History of Armenia*, Vagharshapat, 1871.

view, he stated that the Vardapet who had ordered Ukhtanes to write his *History* was not a representative of the School of Narek at all.

In the very Preface of his *History* Ukhtanes mentioned that the Vardapet of the monastery of Narek, at whose request he wrote his *History*, was in the Catholicos' residence, in Argina. The Vardapet and the author met and spoke to each other: "...when you came to the venerated and saintly patriarch Khachik and brought your religious book *Havatarmat* against Dyophysites as a present for him, in which you yourself spoke with faith due to the Holy Spirit dwelling in you, and we spoke about that *History* face to face. If you wish, I will mention both the place and the time and season when we walked and sat near the river, called Akhurian, read the missal attributed to Athanasius; it was a warm, sunny day, the eleventh of the month Tre⁴⁵, Sunday; nine o'clock"⁴⁶.

The historian also mentioned that the meeting took place during the reign of Smbat the Third Bagratuni.

Zaza Aleksidze, a scholar of Armenian studies, thought that the people and dates in Ukhtanes' work referred to his (Anania Narekatsi's – S. P.) activity. He wrote, "It is true that the title of Ukhtanes' work should be considered to belong to a later period, anyway we can assume from the Preface that Anania Narekatsi was the historian's pen-friend. It is said in the Preface that the undertaker of the creation of the *History* was from the monastery of Narek and was an abbot"⁴⁷.

It is worthy of immediate note that after Anania Narekatsi Grigor became the dean of Narek monastery. One of the folk legends says: "And Saint Grigor was put on the throne of the monastery to rule people forever". Thus let us move on to the discussion of more serious issues, "people and dates mentioned in the work".

* * *

The date of the meeting of Ukhtanes and the Vardapet of the monastery of Narek.

According to M. Brose's counts, that meeting could take place in 973, 980 or 987 when the 11th of the month Tre was Sunday. Scholars of Armenian studies discuss mainly two dates.

⁴⁵Tre lasted from the 9th of November till the 8th of December.

⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 1-15.

⁴⁷*Ukhtanes, History of the Severance of the Georgians from the Armenians*, ed. Zaza Aleksidze, Tbilisi, 1975, p. 227.

M. Ormanyan and Hr. Acharyan admitted the year 973, N. Akinyan found the year 987 probable⁴⁸. Philologist Hrachya Tamrazyan, whose PhD dissertation was devoted to Anania Narekasi's life and works, even thought that the meeting in Argina should have taken place in 980s as Smbat the Second sat on the throne in 977, consequently that meeting could not take place in 973. So, either 980 or 987. The most probable of these two dates is the year 987 and this is why: the Vardapet who went to Argina from the monastery of Narek took a work, entitled *Havataarmat* (Roots of faith) with him, written against Dyophysites, as a gift for the Catholicos. At the same time, Ukhtanes undertook to write the history of the severance of the Georgians from the Armenians, which was directed against Chalcedon. It can be assumed that all this has a direct connection to the extreme aggravation of Armenian-Chalcedonian relationships dating back to the year of 986.

* * *

Until recently there dominated the idea in Armenian studies that Anania Narekatsi had written his *Letter of Confession* by the Catholicos Anania Mokarsi's order (G. Ter-Mkrchyan, B. Sargsyan, G. Hovsepyan, M. Abeghyan, M. Mkryan); "We learn from his (Anania Narekatsi's) *Khostovanagir* (*Letter of Confession*) that he lived in the same place with Anania Mokatsi and on the brink of his death cursed the Tondrakians, not willingly but fulfilling the Catholicos's demand"⁴⁹.

However, analyzing the biographical data in the *Letter of Confession*, Hr. Tamrazyan came to the conclusion that Anania Narekatsi's letter had been addressed not to Anania Mokatsi but to Khachik Arsharuni. In Tamrazyan's opinion Anania Narekatsi and Khachik the First were related in kinship. Both of them were from the same province, most probably from Arsharunik, and had spent their childhood and student years together.

Hr. Tamrazyan's viewpoint seems quite possible though the following circumstances should not be neglected, either: a) Anania Mokatsi was Khachik Arsharuni's uncle; consequently, Anania Narekatsi could be related in kinship with both Khachik Arsharuni and Anania Mokatsi. b) Anania Narekatsi was of the same age as Anania Mokatsi rather than Khachik the First. Anania Mokatsi and Khachik Arsharuni died almost at the same age. Asoghik said about both of them: "He died at a venerable age". Taking into consideration the facts that Mokatsi died in 968 and Khachik Arsharuni in 992, we can conclude that Khachik was 20-25 years younger than his uncle and must have been born in 920s. In this case Anania Narekatsi could not be of the same

⁴⁸ M. Ormanyan, *Azgapatoom* (History of the Armenian Nation), p. 971. H. Acharyan, *Hayots andznanunneri bararan* (Dictionary of the Armenian First Names), vol. 1, p. 191.

⁴⁹ *Ararat*, Ejmiatsin, 1987, p. 94.

age as Khachik (thus they could not have spent their childhood together) because if Anania Narekatsi was born in 960s during the foundation of the monastery of Narek (943) he would be about 20 and could hardly be trusted to be the abbot of the monastery at that age.

The monastery of Narek had been founded before 943, before the death of Gagik Artsruni, because there is a miniature of Gagik Artsruni giving the keys of the monastery to Anania Narekatsi in one of the survived manuscripts (Matenadaran, manuscript № 7359) of *Haysmavurk*. Anania Narekatsi was probably about 40 at that time because before the foundation of the monastery of Narek he and the clergyman Petros had served in the monasteries of Antak and Khavaradzor of the provinces of Havnunk and Arsharunik respectively. And already then he was a prominent Vardapet. It means that Anania Narekatsi must have been born in 900s, while Khachik Arsharuni in 920s.

Hrachya Tamrazyan's belief that Anania Narekatsi's *Letter of Confession* had been addressed to Khachik Arsharuni was based on the following judgment: Catholicos Anania Mokatsi could not order the same author to write a work against the Tondrakians, then accuse him of adhering to the Tondrakian movement and force him to write the *Letter of Confession*. Thus, Hr. Tamrazyan drew a logically true conclusion: it was not Anania Mokatsi but Catholicos Khachik Arsharuni that made Anania Narekatsi curse the Tondrakians. However, if we proceed from this true logic, we will reach a deadlock: it is hardly possible that receiving the *Havatarmat* (Roots of faith), an anti-Chalcedonian, anti-sectarian work as a proof of its author's true faith, Catholicos Khachik Arsharuni would accuse the author of sectarianism and schism. There may arise an objection that the *Havatarmat* was against the Chalcedon while Catholicos Khachik I accused Anania of being Tondrakian. Here is the answer to it; firstly, the Tondrakian sect was a mixture of all the sects of the time; secondly, Anania Narekatsi was also accused of being Chalcedonian that was why he also cursed the Chalcedonians in the *Letter of Confession*.

There is only one way out of this deadlock: accepting that Anania Narekatsi's *Letter of Confession* was really addressed to the Catholicos Khachik Arsharuni but in this case, the existence of the *Havatarmat* becomes impossible. Actually, had Anania Narekatsi made a present of such a work to Khachik the First why would the Catholicos accuse him shortly thereafter? One more very important fact; A. Narekatsi stated in the *Letter of Confession*: "And the one who curses them (sectarians) falsely or with a disguised artifice or only outwardly by

word of mouth and not with all his heart, he himself will be cursed by the above mentioned saints"⁵⁰.

Let us compare it with a part of Narekarsi's epistle addressed to the clergy of Kchav: "...who orders to curse them, and considers our glorified Lord Anania's amazing objection-letter as inappropriate, a filthy talk or not written with faith"⁵¹.

It is obvious that the clergymen of Kchav spoke ill of Anania Narekatsi to the Catholicos, considering his *Argument against the Tondrakians and other Sectarians (Hakacharank)* not a sincere composition. This made the Catholicos doubt Anania Narekatsi's true faith. Anania Narekatsi's *Argument against the Tondrakians and other Sectarians* is mentioned at the end of the *Letter of Confession*, "Now a little about those few ideas of which I informed you not in a perfunctory manner or thoughtlessly or in order to please you, but so that you learn about me from myself, and by deciphering my previous writings, you realize my godliness. Without a moment's hesitation, I perceive the truthfulness of all canons and accept it before God and holy angles, avoiding doctrines adopted by all ungodly people as I have previously written about them. May the same verdict be attained if someone approves or believes what you have written about me! Thanks God. And I say: cursed is the one who relies on the man and not on God, the lord of heaven and earth, cursed is the one who relies on his own power"⁵². Here a question arises: if Anania Narekatsi mentioned his *Hakacharank* in his *Letter of Confession* as a proof of his true faith, why didn't he mention *Havatarmat* written and presented to Khachik Arrsharuni many years later than that? It follows that he did not write any work entitled *Havatarmat* during the period between the *Argument against the Tondrakians and other Sectarians* and the *Letter of Confession* or else he would mention it in the *Letter of Confession*, written on the brink of his death.

If Anania Narekatsi had a work, entitled *Havatarmat* at least some information would survive. It would be mentioned in the Armenian literature at least. Neither Gr. Narekatsi, nor Asoghik, nor Gr. Magistros, nor Lambronnatsi, nor Shnorhali knew of any *Havatarmat* written by Anania Narekatsi while *Hakacharank* was well known and wildly spread among the Armenian intelligentsia. *Hakacharank* has not come down to us either but some parts of it have survived.

⁵⁰"Ararat", Ejmiatsin, 1982.

⁵¹ *Girk Tghtots* (Book of Letters), Tbilisi, 1901, p. 496.

⁵² "Ararat", 1982, p. 18.

In Armenian studies, attempts were made to find extracts from Anania Narekatsi's *Havatarmat*: In his article *Anania Sanahentsi's Hakacharutyun*⁵³, H. Qyoseyan rightfully noted that the extracts attributed to Vardapet Anania in the religious-theological collection, *Armat Havatoy* (*Roots of Faith*), compiled by Vardan Aygektsi, were the works of Anania Narekatsi. Proceeding from the fact that the survived extracts mainly concerned the problems connected with Christ's nature, the author thought that these were extracts from the very *Havatarmat* written by Anania Narekatsi. This opinion is unconvincing; firstly, as Vardan Aygektsi himself noted he had taken those extracts "from Armenian Vardapet Anania Narekatsi's praise-worthy book on faith". Anania Narekatsi's "praise-worthy book on faith" could only be *Hakacharank* as that very work had made the author famous. Besides, Anania Narekatsi's work was directed not only against the Tondrakians but also against the other sectarians. In his work, the author denounced not only the Tondrakians but also the Chalcedonians, in particular, defending and grounding the Monophysite principle of the Armenian Church doctrine proceeding from the fact that Catholicos Anania Mokatsi had ordered him to write *Hakacharank* not only in relation to the activation of the Tondrakian movement but also in respect to the utmost escalation of Armenian-Chalcedonian relationships during the reign of Emperor Romanos.

Let us quote one of the parts attributed to Anania Narekatsi that have come down to us thanks to Vardan Aygektsi: "And as the fire does not change the nature of gold and iron, only adjusts them to its light, or like the light mixed with air or the body and soul are united harmoniously providing the man's entity, God's Word, too, is an unmixed entity beyond our understanding"⁵⁴. H. Qyoseyan found out that never before the comparisons between *gold or iron and fire, light and air* had been used in any other work. After Anania Narekatsi these simile-phrases were used in the letter (986) addressed to the Metropolitan of Sebastia, the letter being preserved in Asoghik's History, and in Anania Sanahentsi's *Hakacharank*. It is worthy of note, that these phrases were found in Grigor Narekatsi's *Book of Lamentations* too, moreover in the disputable Prayer 34:

... formed from an incorruptible mixture

like us in body,

in the manner of the soul with body;

as gold with fire,

⁵³ Historical-Philological Journal, 1982, vol. 2.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

or to put it more plainly,

light in air, neither transformed nor separated.

The author of the letter addressed to the Metropolitan of Sebastia and Grigor Narekatsi had logically taken those similes from the same source: “from Armenian Vardapet Anania Narekatsi’s glorious book on faith”. Anania Narekatsi’s famous book on faith could not be the *Havatarmat* mentioned by Ukhtanes because, as we found out, *Havatarmat* was taken to Argina to Catholicos Khachik in 987 while the letter addressed to the Metropolitan of Sebastia was written in 986. This testifies that the famous book on faith is Anania Narekatsi’s *Hakacharank* written against the Tondrakians and other sectarians.

* * *

It is hard to agree with Hr. Tamrazyan’s belief that Anania Narekatsi was born at the beginning of the 10th century, lived till the end of the century and wrote his *Khostovanagir* on the brink of his death, during the period between 980 (987) and 992. There is no reason to prolong A. Narekatsi’s life until the end of the 10th century. Firstly, we have found out that Anania Narekatsi never had a work, entitled *Havatarmat*; consequently, somebody else went from the monastery of Narek to Argina, to Catholicos Khachik. Thus, it is senseless to consider that *Khostovanagir* was composed after the meeting in Argina, before Khachik Arsharuni’s death (992). Secondly, being born at the beginning of the 10th century A. Narekatsi would hardly be able to go to Argina at the age of eighty. Thirdly, Anania Narekatsi was probably already dead in 977 or was on the brink of death because King Gourgen Artsruni assigned a most honorable and difficult task of commenting *Erg Ergots* (*Song of Songs*) to young Grigor Narekatsi. Gr. Narekatsi wrote in his *History of the Cross of Aparan* (983) that from the monastery of Narek, only his brother Hovannes and he took part in the great religious festival in the province of Mokq (Moxene). In this concern, M. Chamchian noted that at the time Hovannes was the dean of the monastery of Narek and Grigor was the principal of the school of Narek⁵⁵. Gr. Narekatsi talked about Anania Narekatsi in the past tense in his *Aparanits Khachin Patmutyune* (*History of the Cross of Aparan*).

It follows from all this that Anania Narekatsi wrote his *Khostovanagir* during the first years of Catholicos Khachik’s term of office and died immediately after that.

Referring to Asoghik, M. Ormanyan wrote the following about Khachik Arsharuni’s activity during the first years of his office: “Khachik’s activity firstly resulted in putting an end to the

⁵⁵ M. Chamchyan, *History*, vol. 2, p. 857.

dissentions over the throne of the Catholicos, and he made all the parties come to an agreement and “ruling alone he brought peace to Armenia”⁵⁶. Probably at that time the clergymen of Kchav spoke ill of Anania Narekatsi to the new elected Catholicos which became a reason to doubt A. Narekatsi’s true faith and loyalty in general. Considering the fact of Catholicos Vahan’s authority in the province of Vaspurakan and particularly in the monastery of Narek, it becomes clear why Anania Narekatsi cursed not only the Tondrakians but also the Chalcedonians in his *Khostovanagir*. The thing that A. Narekatsi died during the first years of Kachik the First's reign is obvious from the fact that Asoghik attributed A. Narekatsi’s works to the time when Anania Mokatsi was a Catholicos: “At that time most glorious Lord Anania was the Catholicos, who was kind and gracious to his clergymen.

At that time the clergy was flourishing in Armenia. Many monasteries were built for the clergymen.

There also existed Vardapets, true teachers who were good at the Lord’s teachings. Among them were an elderly man, Basilos who knew the Lord’s laws pretty well; non-monastic priest Grigor – a rhetorician of Lord’s Commandments; Barsegh’s disciple – Stephanos who became a clergyman with his word and work befitting disciples; wise and pious, eminent Moses who fasted forty days; poor David; a stingy scholar named Mashkot, the commentator of the Holy Book – Petros, and Anania, the great philosopher of the monastery of Narek whose book was directed against the Tondrakians and other sectarians”⁵⁷.

Anania Narekatsi’s name was not mentioned in the list of prominent Vardapets acting during Khachik the First’s term of office.

Thus, it is hard to agree with Armenologist Zaza Aleksidze’s viewpoint (a traditional viewpoint in the Armenian studies) that the people and dates corresponding to them, mentioned in Ukhtanes’s work, refer to Anania Narekatsi’s activities. During Khachik the First’s term of office and Smbat the Second’s reign Grigor Narekatsi was a famous and respected figure in Armenia: “These days the saintly man – Grigor Narekatsi shone like a sun with his wisdom and virtue”⁵⁸. All the mentioned facts enable us to claim that Ukhtanes wrote his *History* at Grigor Narekatsi’s request.

The biographical information and lofty praises presented in the Preface of the *History*, refer to Grigor Narekatsi rather than to Anania Narekatsi.

⁵⁶ M. Ormanyan, *Azgapatoom* (History of the Armenian Nation), Constantinople, 1912, p. 1125.

⁵⁷ Asoghik, *History*, pp. 184-186.

⁵⁸ Samuel Anetsi, *Havaqmunq i grots Patmagrats* (Chronicle), Vagharshapat, 1893, p. 103.

- a) "These writings are due to your perfect and divine brightness, and wisdom granted by the Holy Spirit. Writing religious songs and being competent in God's Commandments more than anyone else, as a tree with various fruits in a heaven called the monastery of Narek, you, the most glorious lord, universal Vardapet, sprouted, came into leaf and then bloomed with your virtue in the Lord's home, bringing fruits of justice". The historian's words obviously referred to Grigor Narekatsi's life, education, upbringing and maturing in the monastery of Narek where he *bloomed* and *gave fruits*, i.e. started his creative activity, then became the pillar and headmaster of the school. This could not be attributed to Anania Narekatsi because historian Asoghik stated that Vardapet Anania founded the school of the monastery of Narek during Anania Mokatsi's term of office. Anania Narekatsi was already a famous scholar when he came to the monastery. In this concern Hr. Tamrazyan wrote, "Valuable information has survived about Anania Narekatsi's life before coming to the monastery of Narek. That period of his activities was connected with the monasteries of Khavaradzor and Antak in the provinces Arsharunik and Havnunik respectively. Still in that period, Anania Narekatsi was considered one of the outstanding scholars of his time and took part in religious-doctrinal debates.
- b) " And you the exalted with much asceticism and virtue leading to the spiritual fields, you wait for the Lord's coming with alert and watchful farmers". With the words "alert and watchful farmers" (արթնեալ և զգուշացեալ մշակ), Ukhtanes might have hinted at the name *Grigor* which, as the genius poet interpreted in his *Book of Lamentations*, meant *awake* and *guardian*?
- c) In the Preface of his *History* Ukhtanes called the Vardapet, at whose request he was writing his book, "religious author and outstanding rhetorician" and "poet", etc. As we know not only Anania Narekatsi but also Grigor Narekatsi even more displayed fascinating poetic as well as musical ability.
- d) The similarity of the style of Ukhtanes' *History* to the style of Grigor's works speaks of Ukhtanes's close relationship with Grigor and the latter's profound influence on him. As Z. Aleksidze noted, Ukhtanes tried to write some of the Prayers of his *History* in the form of a rhythmical prose, displaying great ability of alliteration. The historian did all this to satisfy his requester's taste. In order to show the linguo-stylistic closeness and similarity of Uktanes's work to Grigor's style, Z. Aleksidze brought the following parts as examples: "With his wise and meaningful thoughts, he thwarted bishops' evil plans. His letters and words completely revealed wicked people's evil intentions".
- e) "I pray to the grantor of lives to prolong your life as it is pleasing to the Creator and desirable for us like the renewal of God's Church is: so said "let it be" it will be". The

historian (Ukhtanes) deeply appreciated his requester as a great ecclesiastical and social figure who the hopes of the restoration and strengthening of the church were pinned on. This slightly resembles the part in *Haysmavurk* where Grigor Narekatsi's activities are estimated, "The saint spared no effort for the unity of the church as the order in the holy church was shattered and neglected by sluggard and carnal clergymen. He wanted to reestablish and restore it".

- f) And after all, Grigor Narekatsi showed some interest in Georgian reality (see M. Chamchian), so most probably, Grigor Narekatsi was the undertaker of writing the history of the Armenian-Georgian separation.

* * *

Accepting that Grigor Narekatsi was Ukhtanes's pen-friend and that they were co-thinkers who met in Argina in 987 and had a talk about the book we might content ourselves with this much but for the following questions arising spontaneously:

- 1) Why did not Ukhtanes mention the name of the Vardapet at whose request he had written his *History*, why did he avoid saying his name openly whereas he venerated him so much and gave enough information about his personality, mental abilities, poetic talent, etc.?
- 2) It is also important to find out why the historian did not mention the year, the season, the month, the date, the day of the week or the time the meeting took place.
- 3) And above all, why did not Ukhtanes give the real reason of Narekatsi's long journey to Argina, to Catholicos Khachik in the Preface? Obviously, Narekatsi would hardly go to Argina only to meet Ukhtanes and propose him to write the *History*.

In order to clarify these questions, we need to consider the information of Narekatsi's journey to Argina where he took the *Havatarmat* written against Dyophysites, against the background of social-political and ideological struggle in the second half of the 10th century. We need to correlate the little information we have about the great thinker's and genius poet's life and activity with the ecclesiastical events taking place in the middle of eighties of the 10th century.

In this period the neighbour Chalcedonian churches greatly oppressed the Armenian Church. The ecclesiastical-doctrinal struggle escalated into violence during Khachik the First's term of office: "During his (Catholicos Khachik's) reign Vardapet Hovhannes, who was a true Christian, preached and commented on the Holy Scripture not with a powerful discourse but wisely. He

was killed by fanatic Georgians and was buried in a monastery of Aksigoms in the province of Basen, and from that day on the monastery lying at the foot of the mountain of apricots was called St. Hovhan Monastery”⁵⁹.

The same historian spoke about the persecutions of the clergymen of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Sebastia and many other cities of Byzantium populated with Armenians.

Putting these facts together with Ukhtanes’ information that only by king Smbat the Second’s order, bishops’, princes’ and other high-ranking people’s mediation and blessing he was able to overcome all the threats directed against him and start writing his *History*, we can conclude that the historian might have been officially permitted to write his *History* (or its second and third parts) during the meeting in 987 which king Smbat and Armenian princes participated in, too.

Thus, in my opinion, Gr. Narekatsi and Ukhtanes met in Argina on the 11th of Tre month in 987 on the occasion of the ecclesiastical council headed by Catholicos Khachik Arsharuni. Grigor Narekatsi was to undergo inquisition in this very council. Presumably, this was the reason that Ukhtanes did not speak of the unpleasant event, did not even mention his requester’s name, and never spoke of the real cause of their meeting in Argina.

However, which is the work – *Havatarmat* that Narekatsi took to Argina with him? There is no such work in the Armenian Literature attributed to Grigor Narekatsi. While the unity of the disputable Prayers of Narekatsi’s *Book of Lamentations*, which we conventionally named *Havato Sahmank* (Profession of Faith) with its content and anti-sectarian orientation could have been taken to Argina under the title *Havatarmat*.

Now let us summarize all that we have stated above. According to the suggested hypothesis, Ukhtanes wrote his *History* not at the request of Anania but of Grigor Narekatsi, whom Ukhtanes met in Argina in 987. Their meeting was not accidental: Grigor had gone to Argina to attend the council convened to try him. As an evidence of his true faith, he took a work entitled *Havatarmat* with him; the work he had written against sectarians. The unity of disputable Prayers of Narekatsi’s *Book of Lamentations* could have been that work.

In his work – *the Armenian writers, 5th-17th centuries*, famous bibliographer N. Pogharian mentioned a manuscript by Anania Narekatsi – *Against Dyophysites* kept in the library of Armenian manuscripts in Jerusalem,⁶⁰. The complete and unique manuscript of Samvel Kamrjadzoretsi’s *Tonapatchar* (Reason of holiday) is kept in the library of Mkhitarian Congregation in Vienna; M. Chamchian and Gh. Alishan drew interesting information about Anania Narekatsi from that manuscript.

⁵⁹ Asoghik, *History*, p. 184.

⁶⁰ N. Pogharian, *Hay Groghner* (Armenian writers), Jerusalem, 1971.

The further investigation of these two and other sources may finally shed a light on whether Anania Narekatsi did or did not have a separate work entitled *Havatarmat* and whether the hypothesis of mine is right or wrong.

However, apart from this hypothesis, the truthfulness of the fact that Narekatsi's trial took place in 987, either in Ani or Argina where Narekatsi justified himself with two apologetic works should be admitted.

Grigor Narekatsi's Humanism

Grigor Narekatsi had a great influence on the development of both Armenian literary and social-philosophical thought and the main aspects of Narekatsi's worldview were manifested in his lyrical poem *Book of Lamentations*.

The famous poem of Narekatsi *Book of Lamentations* has been read with pleasure and interest over the course of many centuries and has even become an object of worship.

Narekatsi's worldview was mainly religious-idealistic, but of historical importance were the problems put forward by him disguised as religious-idealistic in nature. The solutions of these problems, spontaneous dialectical ideas and principles made Narekatsi oppose the medieval Scholasticism and blind faith.

The great poet's worldview has not been fully studied yet. Till now, only partial studies referring to this or that aspect of his views, mainly to the nature of his philosophical worldview have been conducted. The elucidation of the nature of his philosophical worldview has undergone a considerable development: at first Narekatsi's worldview was characterized as a religious

mysticism and no progressive, secular tendency, color or element was attributed to it (M. Abeghyan's initial standpoint, Leo), then Narekatsi's progressive views were revealed and the nature of his views was qualified as pantheism (H. Gabrielyan, M. Mkryan).

Great was Chaloyan's contribution to the revelation of the nature of the *Narek*. In his valuable work *History of Armenian Philosophy*, he regarded Narekatsi's philosophy pantheistic too but also stated, "it is not only a philosophy of pantheism but also an indication to neo-platonic philosophy as a source of pantheism"⁶¹. This was already a substantial progress towards the right characterization of the nature of Narekatsi's philosophy. According to Chaloyan, the nature of Narekatsi's philosophy was pantheism,⁶² and Neo-Platonism was only "indicated" as a source of pantheism. Today it has already become clear that Narekatsi's worldview was neo-platonic, moreover, Narekatsi was the representative of Neo-Platonism in the period of Renaissance. He developed Neo-Platonic views to some extent. It was not a mere imitation or literal revival of Hellenistic and Christian Neo-Platonism but a definite, a higher-level development with almost the same tendencies that we observe in the works of Nikolas of Cusa. As to pantheism, it was not the main essence of Narekatsi's worldview and his philosophical system but only an aspect, an element of that system, and the whole system was based on Neo-Platonism and not on pantheism. The idea of pantheism was indicated in his work as one of the conclusions of Neo-platonic philosophy.

V. K. Chaloyan wrote: "In contrast to the Christian religion, Grigor Narekatsi's pantheism consisted in the conviction that creating nature and everything, God did not become transcendental or higher than nature but identical with it. In order to show the truthfulness of our analysis, we can point out not only the above mentioned words by Narekatsi referring to the union of man and God in which he equally claimed the existence of God in man and man in God but also to the idea that God is in everything and everything is in God"⁶³. Nature was really identical with God for Narekatsi. For instance, in his *Tagh ekeghetsu ev tachari* (An ode to the

⁶¹ V. K. Chaloyan, *Hayots Pilisopayutyun Patmutyun* (History of Armenian Philosophy), Yerevan, 1975, p. 364.

⁶² V. K. Chaloyan wrote: "Narekatsi put neither the question of the relationship of God and nature nor the relationship of nature and mind. Narekatsi's main concern, the axis of his worldview was the man's relationship with God". It is hard to agree with this viewpoint; Narekatsi put the main philosophical question in the form of the interrelation of God and man, as accepted in the Middle Ages. But in the literary-philosophical system of Narekatsi's views, the concept of "Man" was also the symbol of the whole nature; thus the "God-Man" interrelation should be viewed as "God-Nature" interrelation. Besides, Chaloyan himself discovered the idea of the sameness of God and Nature in Narekatsi's works. Consequently, Narekatsi put the question of the interrelation of these two origins and came to the idea of their sameness.

⁶³ V. K. Chaloyan, *Hayots Pilisopayutyun patmutyun* (History of the Armenian Philosophy), pp. 364-365.

Church and Temple) the author expressed the idea that the heavenly church descended to the earth becoming earthly, and he asked whom the temple resembled and answered that the temple resembled God, the incarnate Son.

The temple symbolizes the whole material world which seems to come into existence from God's self-alienation. This idea, not expressed explicitly, comes from Origen. There is some evidence for the existence of this idea in Narekatsi's *Book of Lamentations* too. He believed that the universe was eternal as God was the *renovator of the universe*; that clusters of stars disappeared but appeared again; the elements became temporary and reestablished as permanent; and the end of the world was only the destruction of the visible world and not of the whole material one, and the destruction was not final and absolute, either, as *the creatures together with all their elements were to be recreated in a new form* (Pr. 79, B).

It is true that the principle of pantheism is existent in Narekatsi's works; the idea of the sameness of nature and God and the conclusions derived from it occupy a central place in the system of his views; however, the content of that system is not confined only to it. The pantheistic tendency is only one of the aspects of that content, a powerful, progressive aspect which is however not the basic one. So it cannot be claimed that "Narekatsi put the questions of the relationship of man and God and "God in nature" on the basis of only pantheism, as besides the sameness of nature and God, Narekatsi put the question of their difference; these two origins both coincide and do not coincide. The main point is that in the great poet's works God is not only identical with nature but also transcendental and higher than it is. If Narekatsi admitted only the sameness of God and nature, God and man, then man's (all material beings and the whole nature meant by man) striving for the union with God, the absolute perfectness, would be in vain; this striving was the main tendency of Narekatsi's *Book of Lamentations*.

By what measure of weight shall the balance between

the creator and the clay be set?

You remain in these things infinite and non-examinable,

good in all things, having no part in the wrath

of darkness; therefore, far less are the number of

stars than your greatness,

for you called them into existence from nothing

by merely pronouncing their names.

Or take the mass of the earth floating in air,

created from nothing, from which you established the dry land of earth. (Prayer 29, B)

Thus, nature (stars, the Earth) is too small in comparison with God's greatness.

V. Chaloyan marked: "Pantheism is opposed to creationism; it denies the existence of personal God (anthropomorphism) and the creation of nature by God"⁶⁴. According to Narekatsi, God is both personal and finite and impersonal and infinite, in this way anthropomorphism is and is not denied at the same time. In this respect, Gevorg Khrlopyan wrote: "The peculiarity and liberalism of Grigor Narekatsi's philosophical system first of all consists in the fact that the categories of *God* and *Christ* are discussed as a problem of *Being* that is why their interpretation considerably differs from literal and naïve utterances about them in the Bible. The author completely denied the literal interpretation of the supernatural. Considering the concept of God philosophically, he displayed two approaches. On the one hand, he viewed God as strictly abstract, on the other hand, God, as an end, was quite concrete as he was already the alienated reality, the greatness and value existing in every human and object, an incarnate God and a divinized man"⁶⁵.

Besides, nature both does and does not depend on God (created by him) in Narekatsi's work, so it would be a one-sided approach to "blame" him for pantheism and creationism separately.

Narekatsi solved the main problem of philosophy from the position of Neo-Platonism reflecting some specificity and ability of dialectical thinking; *the whole system of his views is a chain (upward, spiral movement) of negations (sublations), the main concepts of which are God and Man (Nature)*. Among scholars of Narekatsi studies, Prof. M. Mkryan was the first to pay attention to the process of the specific development of the structure and content of the *Book of Lamentations*. He wrote, "The inner strong dramatic statements and the development of *Narek* were first of all conditioned by its ideological essence and nature. As a mystic, Narekatsi aspired to be worthy of seeing God and make his human nature be mixed with and join the divine nature, make his appearance resemble God's real appearance. His emotions and feelings, like the ebb and flow, a violent storm and tranquility of foaming waters, succeeded each other; moreover, in contrast to this example of nature, they were always at their peak, always with new details and embodied in stronger and newer ways of expression. Fear and lament of loss, tantalizing

⁶⁴ V. K. Chaloyan, *Hayots pilisopayutyun patmutyun* (History of the Armenian Philosophy), p. 362.

⁶⁵ G. Khrlopyan, *Narekatsu imastasirakan hayatsqner* (Narekatsi's philosophical views), Garun, 1982, № 6.

hesitations, hope and belief of reaching happiness pushed one another like waves, replaced one another, and the larger and stronger one of them became, the larger and stronger grew the other. The dramatic development of the poem was created this way”⁶⁶.

We have quoted this extract in order to ground the chain of negations in Narekatsi’s views:

1) As opposed to each other, the concepts of *God* and *Man* are distinguished; God is eternal, infinite, united (non-controversial) and man (nature) is temporary, finite, controversial, etc. 2) Man (Nature) is not only temporary and finite but also eternal and infinite, and God is not only eternal but also temporary. Then the concepts are again differentiated. 3) Man (nature) is relatively eternal and temporary, infinite and finite to the extent of human possibilities, and God is absolutely eternal and temporary to the extent of God’s possibilities. In the next phase, this difference is negated by a new level of sameness. 4) *I turn to you for forgiveness not on the meager human scale, but with the full undiminishing measure of loving kindness shown toward us by our Savior Jesus Christ* (Pr. 18, A). Narekatsi puts the question of man’s salvation, return, identification with God not only to the extent of human (nature’s) possibilities, i.e. relatively, but also absolutely, to the extent of God’s *full undiminishing measure*. That is why the poet demands: *Work a miracle upon me divinely* (Pr. 58, A). Thus man is eternal and temporary not only relatively but also absolutely, so is God.

And in this way the sameness is negated, sublated by a difference and vice versa.

During the differentiation the genius poet and thinker gives way to despair and criticizes himself because God is kind and he is evil, thus a man cannot be God. When thinking of sameness he reassures himself again, becomes courageous and proud, then he gets upset and happy again, gives way to despair and reassures himself; *I take heart a bit, then feel yet more abandoned. I gear up and then as quickly slacken* (Pr. 71, B). Thus, the mutual negation, sublation of the phases of identification and differentiation is manifested in a mixture of moods and emotional states, being a storm of feelings and thoughts. Therefore, it would be more correct to term the whole system of Narekatsi’s views literary-philosophical, as thought and emotion are interdependent, transmuted into each other here. During the differentiation the thought (that man is not God and eternal) stirs up emotions and inner burning, and these psychological tortures again make Narekatsi go deep into thought and find a solution. This is the idea of the sameness of God and man (nature), which is achieved through zigzags of thought, and this idea evokes good mood, positive emotions. So this way, thought causes emotion and vice versa.

It is also significant to note that Narekatsi or the lyrical hero does not always give way to despair; on the contrary, during one of the phases of differentiation, however striking and odd it

⁶⁶ M. Mkryan, *Grigor Narekatsi*, pp. 177-188.

may seem, he is pleased with the idea that man is not God. Realizing that to be God means to be deprived of everything that is human and earthly, to be absolutely eternal means to be absolutely temporary too, Narekatsi prefers to live *among the feeling, breathing beings destined for the dark grave* (Pr. 30, B), to be relatively eternal as it means relative mortality. Thus, the great poet prefers the earthly life to the divine, heavenly life. This is his great achievement, the heroic deed of the representative of Renaissance. This idea is sublated, too, and he again seeks to reach God, but being negated, this idea does not lose its true value for Narekatsi.

* * *

The influence of Neo-Platonism on Narekatsi's philosophical views came from the great Armenian philosopher of the 5th-6th centuries, David Anahaght, and "Corpus Areopagiticum" – a work widespread in Armenia at the time. Though the influence of the ideas of the false theory of neo-platonic emanation was little on Narekatsi, it was still existent in his views. In this respect, the description of Christ's birth is of great interest:

You were revealed, Lord beyond words.

You were defined, the boundless one.

You were measured, the non-examinable one.

You focused light, the radiant one.

You became human, the incorporeal one.

You became tangible, the immeasurable one.

You took shape, you who are beyond quality. (Pr. 34, M).

He incarnated the fragment of the divine essence this way. True, there is no mention that the entire material world was formed from the self-alienation of the unity and God in the *Book of Lamentations*. But according to Narekatsi, God is *in the substance of existence unto the ends of the earth* (Pr. 41, B), *is permanently presented and yet remains intact ... who is wholly in each and every part* (Pr. 47, B). Fragments of the divine essence, *which are the glimmering rays of the cloud of light* (Pr. 81, B) exist in every element.

The emanationists tried not only to infer logically the graduation of everything existing from the divine unity, but also to show the way back to the initial divine unity, which was the thing that

mostly bothered Narekatsi, as he related the solution of the man's problems and happiness to this.

Grigor Narekatsi raised the great question about the aim and meaning of human life and existence (the very statement of question was a sign of revolt against the medieval religious-ecclesiastical traditions and dogmas):

I do not know or understand,

by whom, in whose image or why I was created. (Pr. 46, A)

His whole poem was aimed at answering that great, universal question. According to Narekatsi, God was an absolute perfection, and man was imperfect by nature. While in contrast to beings not endowed with intellect, man was closer to the divine perfectness. Narekatsi scolded those who did not understand it:

O fool, why did you choose to be earthbound,

always preoccupied with the worldliness of

the here and now,

carrying on like wild asses in the desert?

On the lamp stand of your body, encircling your head,

a chandelier with many arms was placed,

so that by its light you might not stray and might

see God and know what is everlasting. (Pr. 46, B)

Being endowed with intelligence and realizing his imperfection and sinfulness, man seeks to reach God, absolute perfection. However, according to Narekatsi, by striving to reach God and eternity, the man can become God and eternal while at the same time, he cannot. In general, the principle of "both....and" and not "either....or" is dominant in Narekatsi's logic.

He claimed that man could not become God and be eternal (*And although we ascend to you, our first element – earth holds us down* (Pr. 86, A) because man's nature was different from God's; the man was mortal and so his sins were endless: *The pit is vile and hell is all-encompassing* (Pr. 8, A). According to Narekatsi, the problem of being and not being hang on man's head like the

Damocles sword. This manifested Narekatsi's humanism; he inferred the man's happiness and immortality from human nature and saw it in man's creative and reforming activity.

On the other hand, Narekatsi claimed that man could absolutely become God. In this case, Narekatsi's mysticism was manifested.

Narekatsi's mysticism

Seeking to reach God, man has to get rid of what is human, reach God, and merge with God spiritually. Narekatsi's mysticism has two aspects: rebellious and mild.

First he just wanted God to forgive his sins and to make him be worthy of seeing God. He tried to justify his demand in this way:

I did not exist; you created me.

Before I could wish, you shaped me.

Before I glimpsed the world's light, you saw me...

Knowing in advance my current trials,

you did not thrust me from your

sight. No, even foreseeing my misdeeds,

you fashioned me.

Do not let me be lost in sin and

the Troublemaker's deceptions. (Pr. 18, A)

Narekatsi judged this way: If God created man; he was in need of him. He hinted at it in many parts:

*Turn toward me and have mercy upon me,
O God, who so thirsts, hungers and longs for
my salvation. (Pr. 34, L)*

or

*You have created all and all is yours,
you who are all-compassionate, take mercy on all,
for even those who sin are yours,
they are, too, count for you. (Pr. 31, D)*

In Narekatsi's opinion, only the man's salvation consoled God. People counted to God so the man's loss was not pleasant to Him. Hence, the great philosopher drew the following conclusion: because of the man's loss the divine perfection would be shattered:

*as with the cutting off or loss of an unruly organ
infecting the body,
something is lost in body structure;
the abode of man's feeling,
and the usual shape of the person undergoes
some disfigurement. (Pr. 46, C)*

Consequently, he demanded of God to cleanse him of sins, to lodge him in the rays of the divine light for God's perfection not to be shattered. According to Narekatsi, in this way (with the help of God) the man could absolutely reach the divine eternity.

Then Narekatsi seemed to become milder; God had endowed man with intellect; consequently, man should not demand divine perfection from God but he himself, realizing the power of the divine perfection and his sinfulness, had to admit that all the manifestations of his imperfect nature, i.e. sins alienated man from God. He should not only realize it but also feel it deeply and regret because *blessed is the phrase "I have sinned" that gives the heart a hope* (Pr. 27, C); in this way man could cleanse himself of sins and join and merge with God spiritually. Moreover,

man should say, “*I have sinned*” willingly and not forcibly. As those who uttered those words unwillingly and forcibly:

They do not have perfect love; neither will they have salvation.

In this case, Narekatsi equalled the human perfection with the divine one. His mysticism came from the pseudo-theory of neo-platonic emanation: considering that the whole nature including the man had emerged from the alienation, “outflow” of the divine unity then, Narekatsi believed that becoming God (man=the whole nature) implied inflow to the initial unity – to God. Moreover, in Narekatsi’s opinion man was the only being in nature that was able to return to the initial unity, and he considered it the meaning of man’s life; the way back – that was the most important thing. Thus, as a mystic, Narekatsi really denied the earthly life, depriving man of the qualities of cognition and activity.

* * *

Man can become God relatively or more precisely man is a creator to the best of his ability.

Narekatsi saw that human actions surpassed those of God: *I shudder at the thought that my own actions, the actions of a mere mortal go too far; much further than Yours* (Pr. 59, A). (What courage! Such rebellious ideas are driven like wedges among Narekatsi’s many devotional ideas and lines). He “persuaded” God:

And now, God of compassion, may human deeds

not prevail over your grace, even if they transgress

the laws of nature, but rather may your forbearance

triumph so that your ways may never be less

than those of mortals. (Pr. 13, C).

Or

But those who have healthy organs are not in need of a physician’s care,

and those with good vision have no need of a guide,

and those who are well off do not beg at the doors of the wealthy,

and those who are well fed do not wait for crumbs of bread from the table,

and those who lead a saintly life are not in need of mercy. (Pr. 59, B).

The fact of the man's reformatory activity (surpassing God's affairs) made the great thinker be realistic and seek human perfection in human.

Man always strives for the absolute divine perfection but cannot reach it, and thus human perfection is confined within human abilities, the material world and life activity continuously learning the eternal – God – through the material world. In this case, with his earthly life and activity man resembles, becomes identical with God relatively: *And you were endowed with artful hands and nimble fingers to carry out the practical affairs of daily life like the all-giving right hand of God, that you might be called God (Pr. 46, B).* As David Anghaght worded it, "man resembles God within the limits of the possible." Both David Anghaght and Narekatsi saw the resemblance in the following: *if God already knows everything, man (a perfect philosopher to David Anghaght) seeks to know everything, if God can do as much as he wants, a perfect man wants as much as he can do:*

I must refrain from speaking too much and

crave for the less

within my meager ability. (Pr. 38, B)

Here, Narekatsi acted as a great humanist, supporting the earthly life and man. He did not demand mortification of the body, suppression of passions, but vice versa, he demanded healing of body supporting the human active and full life:

He (the man-S. P.) does not ask to be among the immortals,

who live in the light,

but only among the feeling, breathing beings destined for

the dark grave. (Pr. 30, B)

Narekatsi supported the learning man:

Yet amidst green pastures blooming

with life-giving counsel, intelligent beings

irrationally and willfully choose

to graze in poisonous fields of delusion. (Prayer 60, B).

If man is endowed with intellect, he should seek to learn, think of and do good deeds from morning till night. Narekatsi thought the man's mission, his moral greatness to be this. Besides its moral aspect, every good, positive deed supports life practically, contributes to man's existence, to his immortalization humanly. Proceeding from these standpoints, he assessed the merits of his poem. He thought that those who read his *Book of Lamentations* would be cleansed of sins, would become kinder, would love life, and that would be a monument to the author's immortality:

And although I shall die in the way of all mortals,

may I be deemed to live

through the continued existence of this book. (Pr. 88, B)

Taking into account that Narekatsi's book is a literary work where most judgments are perceived both literally and figuratively, some notions and ideas can be interpreted in many ways, the privilege of the *Book of Lamentations* consists in the fact that it is and will be understood anew by every generation. If we take Narekatsi's concept of God for the whole nature and the universe (the contemporary reader interprets it this very way), everything will fall into place, for man does not exist in nature accidentally, he is a necessity emanating from the eternity of nature. Man is a constituent part of nature and submits to it, but nature has endowed man with intellect to perfect nature itself. Due to his intellect man changes nature but these changes, however fantastic they may seem, are real in nature and are a part of nature; they *count for* nature. With his existence and activities, man contributes to the eternal existence of nature and he himself tries to become eternal to the extent of his abilities.

The Two Pearls of Pagan Poetry Literarily Refined by Narekatsi

The 10th century saw the rise of the complicated process of the secularization of the Armenian spiritual-cultural life. Considerable ideological changes were marked – from the denial of “earthly” life to its evaluation and support, from the medieval religious-ascetic ideal to earthly full life, to a new perception of what is human.

The greatest representative of that turning point in the historical development of the Armenian spiritual life was Grigor Narekatsi. Narekatsi could not confine himself to the ecclesiastical-Christian literature in order to reflect the new, humanistic moods of his time. The new content required new ways of expression. This conditioned the genius poet’s thirst for the use of the means of the Armenian folklore.

Though the Christian ideology and traditions had a great impact on Narekatsi’s literary work, it does not mean that the national traditions, psychology and mentality were alien to him, and that his poetry was devoid of purely national features, national feelings, style and color. Certainly, Narekatsi was a purely Armenian, a purely national phenomenon. He was essentially a folk poet. The vivid evidence of it is the fact that one of the sources of his poetry, the purest and most prolific one, was folklore.

The distinctive feature of the Early Renaissance was that there arose an uncommon interest in the cultural values of the past, and the treasures of national figurative linguo-mentality of the pagan period, buried in oblivion because of Christianity, were revived and put into “circulation”. The pioneer of that process in the tenth-century of the Armenian reality was Gr. Narekatsi.

It is beyond doubt that in the 10th century stories of spring, awakening of nature, fertility, dying-and-rising deity (Ara), the deities of the sun (Mihr) and thunderstorm (Vahagn), earth and heaven, fruitful waters and stories referring to other cults were still alive in folk memory. Such a sensitive and shrewd person as Narekatsi could not be indifferent to them. He had got acquainted with treasures of the figurative thinking of the pagan period not only from literary monuments (Moses of Khoren and others) but also from folklore.

The secularization of the spiritual life led to nature and man became the subject matter and purpose of literature and poetry. In Narekatsi’s lays, the love towards nature grew into worship of nature, and this was the result of the impact of the pagan culture.

M. Mkryan wrote, “Narekatsi’s lays are, first of all, songs of nature worship; the poet admires the natural beauties of the world, this admiration reminds of the pagan feeling of nature”⁶⁷. Let us recall Narekatsi’s wonderful lay “Transfiguration”:

The misted rose has drawn a veil

Against the bold rays of the sun,

Above, on the sun’s rays

*The sea-born flower spreads*⁶⁸.

There are two “layers” of images and expressive means in Narekatsi’s poetry – secular and Christian. It is hard to say what was the most important for the poet; the expression of Christian dogmas and ideas through images taken from folklore, thereby making them closer and understandable for people, or the contrary, the use of the treasures of folklore behind this veil, saving them from oblivion, expressing love of life and the new humanistic moods, again putting them into literary circulation. Very likely, as a controversial thinker and a moderate reformer he pursued both of these goals at the same time.

If we follow in the footsteps of the process of the creation of Narekatsi’s lays step by step, it will become obvious that the poet freely employed elements of the pagan figurative linguo-mentality. He made use of not only the existing elements but also created new ones by analogy. It is explicit from the comparison of the *Vahagni Tsnunde* (Birth of Vahagn) with some of his lays: *fiery-haired youth* has become *fiery-haired child* in Narekatsi’s Ode to Resurrection, the “crimson reed” in the waters in travail, symbolizing the birth of Vahagn, coincides with the sea flower in Narekatsi’s *Tagh Vardavari* (Transfiguration). The sea and the flower are of the same color. The whole sea is lit up with the color of that flower, as if the whole nature flourishes due to it. The image of the same flower in *Ode to Birthday* symbolizes Christ’s birth:

He shines brightly

In the holy bosom of his mother.

He was born like a sun, as love,

As a flower in the Virgin’s bosom.

⁶⁷ M. Mkryan, Grigor Narekatsi, p. 143.

⁶⁸ *Transfiguration, Armenian Poetry Old and New: a bilingual anthology*, trans. and ed. Aram Tolegian, Wayne State University Press, 1979, p. 39.

The simile “the eyes were suns” occurs in one of Narekatsi’s birthday odes too: the eyes are compared with “two sparkling” suns in them. In analogy with the expression *purple sea*, the poet has created the following line: *The earth was purple like sea (Eulogy on Solomon’s temple)*. N. Marr – a celebrated scholar of Armenian studies, gave high praise to Narekatsi’s and Rustaveli’s literary heritage. He marked that the source of the works of these great poets of Caucasian literature was *the Habetian bottom of the Caucasian World*, i.e. each of these genius poets turned to the achievements of the past of his nation’s spiritual culture, made use of the ancient values of folklore.

Thus the influence of the pagan sun worship is obvious in both Narekatsi’s and Rustaveli’s works. In Narekatsi’s works God (Christ) is identified with sun. In the *Book of Lamentations* the author:

1. First views God and the sun as incompatibly different from each other. The sun is made of air and is material and thereby different from God.
2. Then the author makes the first step towards their identification on the basis of comparison between God and the sun: *Make your righteous sun shine on the gloom of my heart with morning light.* (Pr. 84)
3. At the end of the poem they are fully identified, Christ is referred as *the Sun of justice*. Mesrop Mashtots was the first to use this image-expression in the Armenian Christian poetry but it is older in its origin, being an expression of the pagan sun worship.

In Ancient Greece as well as in Ancient East the Sun deity was the symbol of equality, justice, the fair patron and judge of mankind. Christ as a *Sun of justice* bore the same ideological load for Narekatsi, too:

Lord of all, Jesus Christ,

Son of living God, beyond human understanding.

You grant the sun of sweetness to the evil as

well as the good, and make it rain upon both.

You mete out fairly the vicissitudes of life. (Pr. 84)

However, the pagan spirit is more explicit in these lays, *The chariot came down from the mountain Masis* and *I praise the roar of the lion*.

The chariot came down from the mountain Masis

With a golden throne in it.

And on the throne there was a purple muslin

And the son of the king on it.

And on his right, was the seraphim with six wings

And on his left, was the cherubim with many eyes.

This part of Narekatsi's well-known *Ode to Resurrection* has become a kind of Sphinx's riddle in Narekatsi studies. There are different viewpoints on the meaning of *chariot*.

The philologist Armine Qyoshkeryan wrote: "Some people view this image as a description of a luxurious royal chariot coming down from Masis, the solemn march of which was depicted by the author in analogy with such marches of Artsruni kings (M. Abeghyan). According to another viewpoint, it is a nice description of a village cart and a carter (M. Mkryan). Recently an idea has been put forward, according to which Narekatsi depicted Christ's resurrection by means of the divine chariot and oxen, thereby glorifying the idea of resurrection in general, meanwhile connected with the idea of the revival of our motherland (G. Abgaryan). Then another viewpoint was put forward: the ode reproduces the biblical legend of the chariot in which the ark of the divine commandments given to Moses was taken to Jerusalem (A. Mnatsakanyan)⁶⁹."

A. Qyoshkeryan thought that the explanation of the ode was in the part beginning with the line: "the chariot on Sinai".

However, that interpretative part is tied to the literary image of the ode so "mechanically" that is easily separated from it and viewed as an independent unit (in some sources the ode has been preserved without that interpretative part).

In M. Mkryan's opinion, the sources of this and many other lays of Narekatsi had most probably been folk legends and myths, which were, of course, refined literarily. M. Mkryan wrote, "Now the point is to understand the connection of this ode, as an allegory, with Christ's resurrection. But the fact that its source is folklore is beyond doubt"⁷⁰.

As the ode expresses the idea of resurrection and in ancient Armenian beliefs the worship of the dying-and-rising deity was connected with Ara Geghetsik (Ara the Beautiful), it can be assumed that this lay is based on the beautiful pagan song devoted to Ara's rebirth. Ara's worship in Rshtunik and Van was deeply rooted in folk memory, so that even after the adoption of

⁶⁹ Grigor Narekatsi, Tagher ev Gandzer (Lays and Coda-chants), ed. Armine Qyoshkeryan, Yerevan, 1961, p. 253-254.

⁷⁰ M. Mkryan, *Grigor Narekatsi*, p. 153.

Christianity the people of Vaspurakan province remembered their Ara in Christ. That is why the image of Narekatsi's "chariot", as an allegory, should be connected with Christ's resurrection as it used to symbolize Ara's rebirth.

But, how is the chariot related to the idea of Ara's rebirth? In order to clarify the question it is relevant to mention that besides being a deity of spring, awakening of nature, fertility and agriculture, Ara was also worshiped as a deity of the sun, spring-bringing sun.

Still in the eighties of the 19th century, the English scholar Archibald Sayce regarded the Armenian god Ara as a sun deity. G. A. Ghapnyants regarded the eastern Slavonic god Jarilla (Yarilla) as the counterpart of our Ara; Jarilla was not only the god of spring, fertility and love but also the sun.

The sun used to be worshiped all over Armenia but the worship was not homogeneous. Songs and odes, festivals and rituals dedicated to him always bore local characteristics. For instance, the folk legend says that the Sun's golden bed lies at the bottom of Lake Van. To the people of Vaspurakan it meant that the sun set and fell asleep in Lake Van while for the people of Taron, Mush the sun woke up and rose from this lake. If the sun set in Lake Van for the people of Vaspurakan, then it rose from the right side of Masis in spring. Therefore, the image of chariot in Narekatsi's *Ode to Resurrection* is a pagan image of the rise of the spring-bringing sun. The typological comparison of Narekatsi's lay and a Hittite poem, entitled *the Sun Hymn* indicates that the depiction of the chariot coming down from the right side of Masis is connected with the pagan sun worship. It is beyond doubt that ancient Armenian and Hittite cultures have much in common, particularly in mythology, or if there are doubts, only due to the likeness of these cultures that leads to their identification. Let us quote a part from the Hittite poem *the Sun Hymn*:

Sun, You bring the Man, the disdained Man

whom all the Gods reject and hate,

back to You. You are merciful to him.

You, Sun, protect the man – your serf...

Your serf the man feeds the four steeds of your chariot with barley.

The four steeds will eat which means you, the Sun, will live too.

Can you hear me? The man, the serf of yours,

Who utters words in honor to You,

Wants to hear Your own words,

O, kingly hero, Sun the benefactor.

You cross the four corners of the world with your chariot,

On your left, fly all the horrors in the sky,

And on your right, all the fears fly.

The similarity of the images is explicit at first glance. The image of a four-wheeled chariot or carriage is typical of ancient myths devoted to the sun. In the Hittite poem, steeds are yoked to the chariot while in Narekatsi's ode white oxen are. Both of these variants are found in myths, but in the Armenian ones oxen occur more frequently (based on their usage in agriculture) connected with the worship of Ara, the patron deity of spring-bringing sun and agriculture. According to G. A. Ghapanyants, drawings of the ox or bull on "dragon" stones were the symbols of Ara worship. In our folk song *Horovel*, the ox is the symbol of the patron of spring, agriculture, fertility, i.e. Ara too.

The compared literary images have much in common even in their details:

You cross the four corners of the world with your chariot, on your left fly all the horrors in the sky and on your right all the fears fly, cf. Narekatsi's lines –And on his right, was the seraphim with six wings and on his left, was the cherubim with many eyes.

However, in my opinion the character of a serf is the most interesting in these images.

Analyzing Narekatsi's ode, M. Mkryan considered the serf as an embodiment of the ordinary peasant in whose image the power of earth was expressed:

That serf was lithe and active,

Middle-sized and strong-armed,

Broad-shouldered, fair-haired and a terrible roarer.

In the Hittite hymn the serf was despised by gods, he was a cultivator who presented the products of his work to the god of the sun.

Even after making sure that the description of the chariot in Narekatsi's lay is connected with the pagan worship of the sun, still it is not clear what the connection between this image and the idea of resurrection is.

There is such a plot in the Eastern mythology: the god of the sun falls out with the world and leaves it, which causes chaos. Gods ask him to come back, and he, giving way to the man's petition, comes back.

There has survived a legend with such a plot about the Hittite dying-and-rising god Tilipinu; the god of spring and fertility. There were such legends and stories in Ancient Armenia too. In regard to the folk legend *Mheri Dur* (Mher Door), G. Ghapanyants noted that it was an ancient legend about the sun god's (Mihr of Mher) becoming sulky, leaving the world, entering a mountain (rock) and shutting himself there, his coming out of the mountain and resurrection. In Narekatsi's ode, the chariot is coming down from the right of Masis, i.e. the sun rises in between the Greater and Lesser Masises. Hence, the Masis Mountains were considered an entrance to the underworld from which the spring-bringing sun rose and resurrected in the Armenian mythology. Let us quote the myth of Artavazd's imprisonment in Masis:

When you ride to hunt

Near the holy mountain Masis,

May demons take you

To the dark caverns of Masis.

And may you abide there

And never see light.

Here, the most interesting is that Artavazd's imprisonment and detention in the darkness is connected with Masis. It proves once more that in pagan Armenians' mind the entrance to the underworld was Masis.

The epic of Gilgamesh tells about twin mountains – Mashu between which there are cooper gates, and the one who enters through them never comes out; only the sun does. Let us quote the parts of interest to us:

He has heard of the mountains named Mashu

Which guard the sunrise and sunset every day.

*Their peaks reach the sky,
Their knees reach the underworld,
Man-scorpions guard their gates.
The scorpions' appearance is horrible and their look is destructive,
Their glimmering light destroys mountains.
They guard the sun every time it rises and sets...
...Nobody has passed the mountain pass yet.
It goes 2760 meters inside,
The darkness is dense, not a shred of light can be seen.
After the sunrise the gates are shut
And opened during the sunset,
After the sunset, they are shut again.
Gods let only Shamash out of there...
... Go Gilgamesh your difficult way
And pass the mountains of Mashu,
Pass the woods and mountains fearlessly
And come back safe.
The gates of the mountain are open for you⁷¹.*

Weren't the twin mountains Mashu the Greater and Lesser Masisses from the inside of which the sun came out riding his fiery chariot? Especially taking into account that Gilgamesh had reached those mountains after a long journey; crossing rivers, a dark mountain pass 2762 meters long, Gilgamesh appeared in the Stone orchard, which, according to investigators, was the very earthly heaven. Gilgamesh had gone to Sun-Shamash to find eternal life, in the hope of reviving, resurrecting Enkidu. Hence, Sun-Shamash was a deity giving eternal life and resurrection. In the same way, the deities of spring, sun and resurrection were merged in the worship of Ara among

⁷¹ Poetry of Ancient East (in Armenian).

Armenians. Hence the prince, coming down with his chariot from the right of Masis, was the spring-bringing Sun – Ara who had fallen out with the world, had left it but giving way to the serf's, man's, toiler's continuous petition: "Haralo, Arale, ari Haralo, Horovel, (Arahel, Ara el, i.e. rise Ara)", came back, resurrected from the underworld, awakening nature, giving warmth, life, fertility to the man. Man the toiler brought the Sun to the world in his cart. This image is of great importance to us. The sun must rise on the right of Masis for the Armenians. And the sun's return depended on the man, the land cultivator. The color-bringing, spring-bringing sun came back at the man's request and will. The peasant made the chariot of sun and life move:

He shouted at the oxen,

And the creak of the wheels responded to him.

And the chariot started to move,

And the wheels began to turn. (Ode to Resurrection)

In the lay beginning with the line "I praise the roar of the lion", the lion symbolizes the same as the image of the chariot in the above-mentioned lay.

I praise the roar of the lion

Who called to the four-winged,

It called to the four-winged

The roar spread in the underworld.

The underworld trembled

And shattered because of the roar.

The roar I heard destroyed my castles:

It wanted to destroy my castles

And free the prisoners.

Blessed are the prisoners

Who've become trophies for the lion,

Becoming trophies for the lion,

they no longer fear of torments,

For crowns are awaiting them

And they will be given crowns

By the immortal king lion.

But for the allusion to cross (*Who called to the four-winged*) the lay could be regarded as a purely pagan work. But that Christian symbol (by the way, the symbol of cross existed in ancient Armenian, Urartian religious beliefs too) ties the content of the lay to Christ's resurrection. Then what is the connection between the image of the lion and the Son's, Christ's mission of salvation?

In my opinion, only by the influence of pagan beliefs can the meaning of the lion in this remarkable lay be explained and understood, for the lion, as a symbol of Christ's resurrection, does not exist in the Christian religion, and it is hardly possible that it is a literary creation by the poet Narekatsi.

The mythological motif of the dying-and-rising deity (hero) was very popular among the pagan Armenians living near Lake Van. That motif has been expressed in folk myth-legends about Ara, Artavazd, Mher in different ways, among which the oldest and the most popular one is the legend about Ara. Mher, as a sun deity, being related to the worship of Ara among Armenians, obtained the function of god-hero, entering the underworld (dying) and coming out (resurrecting). The two Mhers in the epic of *Sasna Tsrer are*, in fact, the split of the same legendary god-hero⁷². In the Armenian folk epic, the god-man hero is called "Aryuts Mher" (Lion Mher) or "Aryutsadzev Mher". Of course, the epic gives another explanation why Mher has been called so (he killed the lion by dividing the lion into two equal parts with his arms) but the name is a relic of folk memory. It retains the reminiscences of the sun god Mihr as the lion was his symbol. In the Ancient culture, the sun god was pictured in the appearance of a man standing on a lion.

The lion was the symbol of sun, power and omnipotence, but how is it connected with the idea of resurrection? In Narekatsi's lay, the lion terrified the whole underworld with its roar, shattered and shook it, destroyed the chains and forts and released prisoners. This image is, of course, a product of pagan influence and expresses the pagan beliefs about the dying-and-rising god's

⁷² Such a split is observed both in Ara's and in the Egyptian god Hor's cult. Ara's son is called Ara, likewise is Hor's son called Hor.

fight against and his victory over the lord of the underworld. This motif has survived in almost all the ancient peoples' mythological cultures with various transformations. It was the mysterious cult of the Sphinx among the Ancient Egyptians, for instance. The Sphinx that used to be called Shesep-ankh, Hor-emateq, the deity of the rising sun, the winner over darkness, Harmakis (Hor of the heaven) thousands of years ago, was the symbol of the Egyptian god – Hor.

Hor (also Har) was worshiped in the Ancient Egyptian religion as one of the sun gods, which gradually merged and was identified with the cult of Ra⁷³, the supreme god of the sun. According to the legend, he was Osiris' and Izida's son. Avenging for his father, he won Set, symbolizing the evil, darkness and death, revived his father Osiris and became the symbol of resurrection and eternal life. The epithets of Hor: "winner over darkness", "deity of the rising sun", lion-shaped, lion-like, given to Sphinx witness to it.

The Babylonians had a god-hero, named Ura about whom they said: "O, hero, you left the city and entered the palace in the form of a dog; seeing you, the soldiers became disarmed"⁷⁴.

In Nsarekatsi's lay, God enters the underworld in the form of a lion and the chains and forts become destroyed due to his appearance and roars. To the academician G. Ghapantsyan's mind, the name of the god-hero Ura has a Sumerian origin. In Sumerian 'Ur' means dog and 'Urmah' lion, literally a big dog. Interestingly, there was a deity named Ura in the Urartian gods' pantheon too: that god probably had a positive function, entering the underworld in the form a lion and freeing prisoners by destroying the forts, i.e. he is identified with Ara and Mihr who revive, resurrect the nature and people. No wonder god Ura was mentioned in the Urartian inscriptions of "Mheri dur" (Mher's door).

Proceeding from the fact that the basis of these two lays of Narekatsi are the images of pagan poetry almost in their original form, these lays should be classed among those unique pieces of the Armenian pagan poetry which have come down to us, of course, mentioning that they were literarily refined by Grigor Narekatsi. This opinion of mine is supported by the fact that in almost all his lays and coda-chants Narekatsi has displayed his own abilities of various poetic devices (e.g. acrostics, alteration, etc.) freely and in abundance, and in these two lays the poet just did not want to violate the original, pagan images and their structure with his own devices.

"In the tracks of Narekatsi",

Tbilisi, "Merani", 1987.

⁷³ In the researchers' opinion, Ra is identical with our Ara.

⁷⁴ See G. Ghapantsyan's, Historical-linguistic works, v. 2, (in Russian), Yerevan, 1975, p. 193.

A New Hypothesis of Grigor Narekatsi's Trial

Arshaluys Ghazinyan

Candidate of Philological Sciences

Although there are a great number of books about Narekatsi in many languages, there is also much philological dispute, different and very often controversial evaluations and unsolved mysteries. There is only one truth; it is the ways to reach it that are different.

The publishing-house Merani in Tbilisi published Samvel Poghosyan's book *Narekatsu Hetqerov (In the tracks of Narekatsi)* devoted to the elucidation of the mystery of Narekatsi's trial, the evaluation of the poet's humanism and mysticism and the pagan sources of his two lays. The two third of the book is devoted to the mystery of Narekatsi's trial about which the author gave a talk at the conference of the Armenian Medieval Literature in September in 1986. This book makes it possible to get acquainted with the new hypothesis put forward by the author in detail. Of course, it is pleasant that Poghosyan has tried to penetrate into the complicated social-political and ideological-cultural phenomena of Narekatsi's era, where much is under a veil of religious and doctrinal struggle and to reveal Narekatsi as a poet, citizen, thinker and humanist.

S. Poghosyan has presented the new hypothesis of Narekatsi's trial in the following way: Narekatsi's freethinking and mysticism were the basis for accusing him of "being a Tondrakian though the poet did not consider himself a one". "The conservative clergy could have wished to try Narekatsi" and Poghosyan sees no reason not to believe that "bishops and princes have assembled somewhere to try Narekatsi". According to Poghosyan, "Probably, Narekatsi really attended the council convened to try him and was able to justify himself having taken with him not only the epistle addressed to the abbot of Kchav monastery but also another work which he had written his creed in". In Poghosyan's opinion, the unity of the Prayers 34, 75, 92, 93 could be that work. According to Poghosyan, "initially those Prayers were a separate, complete work, and later the author had to put them into the *Book of Lamentations* "to secure himself of accusations". Following Chamchyan, Poghosyan considers that the trial could have been convened in 987 and in the summer of that year, it was not bishop Ukhtanes and Anania Narekatsi that met in Argina, as accepted in the Armenian studies, but Grigor Narekatsi and Ukhtanes. Hence, it was not Anania Narekatsi that took his *Havatarmat* written against Dyophysites as a gift for Catholicos Khachik Arsharuni, but Grigor Narekatsi who took a doctrinal work there. According to Poghosyan that work was the unity of the disputable Prayers.

According to Poghosyan Ukhtanes wrote the *History of Armenians* not at the request of Anania but of Grigor Narekatsi. Ukhtanes's rapturous words about the celebrated teacher, rhetorician and "eloquent poet" and "universal Vardapet" refer not to Anania but to Grigor Narekatsi.

This is the essence of the new hypothesis on Narekatsi's trial. Poghosyan's arguments and assumptions seem to be solid and logical, probable and acceptable at first glance, especially as he has introduced the general atmosphere of the anti-Chalcedonian, anti-sectarian struggle of that era.

In my opinion, this is the main merit of the book. However, there are not sufficient bases for the new hypothesis, especially as Poghosyan confined himself only to a published literature and did not try to ground his new hypothesis by manuscript data. My intention is not to argue with Poghosyan; I just would like to draw his attention to some facts, which make the new hypothesis improbable for me. First of all, I see no basis in the statement that Ukhtanes did not write his *History* at the request of Anania Narekatsi. Ukhtanes' *History* was published in Vagharshapat in 1871. It is said in the preface that there was only one sample "written in boloragir (round script) either in the 11th or 12th century" (p. 1). It is also mentioned in the preface that Ukhtanes wrote it "at the request of Father Anania, the abbot of the monastery of Narek and preeminent Vardapet". There is no reason not to believe this fact. The first part of the *History* is entitled "Reply to Anania's letter and my promise to fulfill his request". Ukhtanes considered himself as one of his disciples "the most inferior of your disciples or sons doing credit to you" and modestly stated that Anania had chosen *him* to write the *History* "from among his many satellites", which was "a sign of your love and respect towards me".

According to Hrachya Tamrazyan, the year of the meeting in Argina could be either 980 or 987. Poghosyan has taken the year 987 for granted. Well, does Poghosyan think that Grigor Narekatsi, almost 40 at the time and not being the abbot of Narek monastery, could already have a bishop disciple and be called "preeminent Vardapet" which means the first among Vardapets. Besides, it is unknown when Anania Narekatsi really wrote his *Confession Letter*. According to this new research, it was not addressed to Catholicos Anania Mokatsi but to Khachik Arsharuni. I believe that it could be written after the work *Havatarmat* which Anania took as a present to his Catholicos friend. Anania was an authority in doctrinal affairs. He had already written his *Argument against the Tondrakians and other sectarians*. During these years of acute struggle against the Tondrakians and sectarians it was natural that he should write another work, *Havatarmat*. How it was accepted is another matter.

Speaking of Narekatsi's humanism and mysticism, Poghosyan has rightly noted that "Narekatsi's ideology was mainly of neo-platonic character", his ideas bore the influence of neo-platonic emanation i.e. the outflow of the divine light; Narekatsi was concerned with the light's way back connecting it with the problem of the way of human happiness. Poghosyan has rightly described Narekatsi's mysticism, too; *Man is an imperfect creature, God is an absolute perfection. Man tries to reach and merge with God through moral self-perfection.*

As to the pagan sources of Narekatsi's two lays (*The chariot came down and I praise the roar of the lion*), it should be noted that these lays are really connected with folklore and the reflection of pagan beliefs is explicit in them. The sacrificial lamb, the pigeon and the rose are derived from pagan beliefs, and Christ himself is a transformation of the pagan dying-and-rising deity.

The third and last part of Poghosyan's book begins with these lines: "The 10th century saw the rise of the complicated process of the secularization of the Armenian spiritual-cultural life. Considerable ideological changes were marked—from the denial of "earthly" life to its evaluation and support, from the medieval religious-ascetic ideal to earthly full life, to a new perception of what is human". Grigor Narekatsi was the greatest representative of that turning point, of the powerful movement of secularization, and I myself read his works with interest, irrespective of the degree of inclusiveness and deepness, love and warmth of his every word. The same was the case with reading the book of Samvel Poghosyan from Tbilisi.

A Few Words

Twenty years have passed since the publication of the book *In the Tracks of Narekatsi* and Arshaluys Ghazinyan's review. Unfortunately, I had neither a chance nor time to return to Grigor Narekatsi's trial and the further investigation of the issues related to it. However, I am still convinced that historian Ukhtanes met Grigor Narekatsi in Argina in the year of 987 on the occasion of the ecclesiastical council convened by king Smbat and Catholicos Khachik Arsharuni. The aim of the council was to find some ways for preventing the new wave of persecutions of the Armenians in Byzantium dating from the year of 986.

Thus, it was not accidental that besides bishops, secular authorities, princes, lords, eminent personages (according to *Haysmavurk*) attended the council, as in the 10th century the Armenian-Chalcedonian conflicts were not only an external but also an internal threat to the Armenians. Moreover, it was a threat not only to the Armenian Church but also to the united statehood. Such councils were called at fatal moments. It was a great event though for some reasons there is no concrete information about it either in official chronicles or in historiography. Probably Ukhtanes hinted at that very council when he wrote: "...due to the words, efforts and undertaking of the blessed bishops of St. Gregory the Illuminator and their brethren, by king Smbat's order, due to the participation of lords interested in religious affairs, princes of every principality and other eminent personages who helped us and supported religious affairs".

How could the whole religious and secular elite unanimously approve and support Ukhtanes' undertaking? It could happen only in one case, having discussed the main issues during the council in Argina they heard Ukhtanes' question too and made a corresponding decision, especially as the history of the severance of the Georgian Church from the Armenian Church was closely connected with the main topic of the council.

Ukhtanes was really younger, less popular and held a lower office than Grigor; in M. Ayrivanetsi's chronicles, Grigor Narekatsi comes before the historian Ukhtanes. In 987 Ukhtanes could be a bishop of neither Edessa nor Urha: the Armenian-Byzantine relationships de-escalated a little after the Byzantine emperor Barsegh's (Basil's) visit to the East. Ukhtanes was deeply influenced by Grigor Narekatsi's ideology (as he himself testified it) and in this sense, he considered himself his disciple, spiritual son. Probably that was the reason that the great reformer Grigor Narekatsi's and his co-thinker Ukhtanes' names were not even mentioned in Stephanos Asoghik's *History* which ended with the description of the events of the year 1004. Whether it was the result of Catholicos Sargis' ill will towards Grigor Narekatsi (that very Catholicos ordered Asoghik's *History*) or it was Asoghik's personal attitude, the fact is that

Grigor Narekatsi was already dead in 1004, however, even the name of the sun that once "had shone in the Armenian vault of heaven ", was not mentioned in the official historical document of the time. Correlating this with some other facts, we see that it was not accidental. For instance, in 1003, shortly after finishing his *Book of Lamentations*, Grigor Narekatsi died untimely and suddenly, as *Haysmavurk* informs, leaving the implementation of his reformatory plans unfinished. In addition, in that very year there broke out an armed struggle against the Tondrakians and other sectarians, the struggle was headed by Vahram Pahlavuni and blessed by Catholicos Sargis. Naturally, persecutions and pursues of the heterodox and the proponents of moderate reforms grew harsher.

...Only after all this do I understand the tragic nature of the genius poet's words: *in the darkness of the night, without a flicker of light, I doze in the stupor of mortality* (Pr. 68, C).

Grigor Narekatsi's Philosophical Views

A. Ontology

(Book of existence)

“Grigor Narekatsi put the questions of the relationships of neither God and nature nor nature and mind. The main thing which Grigor Narekatsi was concerned with; the axis of his worldview was the man's relationship with God”⁷⁵.

It is hard to agree with Chaloyan's opinion because Narekatsi put the question of the relationship of God and man, as accepted in the Middle Ages. The concept of *Man* was at the same time the symbol of the whole nature in the literary-philosophical system of Narekatsi's views; thereby God-Man relationship should also be viewed as God-Nature relationship. Chaloyan himself discovered the idea of the sameness of God and Nature in Narekatsi's works; consequently, Narekatsi put the question of the interrelation of those two origins and came to the idea of their sameness.

V. Chaloyan wrote: “In contrast to the Christian religion, Grigor Narekatsi's pantheism consisted in the conviction that creating nature and everything, God did not become transcendental or higher than nature but became identical with it. In order to show the truthfulness of our analysis, we can point out not only the above mentioned words by Narekatsi, referring to the union of man and God in which he equally claimed the existence of God in man and man in God but also to the idea that God is in everything and everything is in God”⁷⁶. God and man were really identical for Narekatsi. For instance, in *Ode to Church and Holy Temple* the author developed the idea that the heavenly church descended to earth and became an earthly one, and he asked, “Who does the temple resemble?”, and answered that it was like God, the incarnate Son.

The temple symbolizes the whole material world which seems to come into existence because of God's self-alienation. It follows from the sameness of God and man that nature is also infinite, eternal like God. This idea, mentioned indirectly, implicitly comes from Origen. There are cases witnessing to the existence of such ideas in Narekatsi's poem. He believed that the universe was eternal as God was the *renovator of the universe*, clusters of stars disappeared but appeared again, the elements became temporary and reestablished as permanent, the end of the world was the destruction of THIS visible world and not the whole material one, and that destruction was not final and absolute either, as *the creatures together with all their elements would be recreated*

⁷⁵ V. Chaloyan, *Hoyots Pilisopayutyun Patmutyun* (History of the Armenian Philosophy), Yerevan, 1975, p. 349.

⁷⁶ Ibid., pp. 364-365.

in a new form (Pr. 79, B). Besides, enumerating man's (= nature's) "sins" which were the manifestations of his earthly, physical nature, Narekatsi thought that they were endless; consequently it directly witnessed to the endlessness and eternity of nature too.

Though the principle of pantheism exists in Narekatsi's poem and the conclusions deriving from it occupied an important place in the system of his views, his philosophical worldview was not confined only to it. The pantheistic orientation was only one of the aspects of his worldview; true, it was powerful and progressive but only one aspect not the primary one. So it cannot be claimed that Narekatsi "put the question of God-man relationship and that "God is in nature" only on the basis of pantheism and solved them in his own way", as in parallel with the sameness of God and nature, he put the question of their difference: these two origins both coincide and do not coincide in the spheres of their existence. The fact is that the great thinker believed that God was not only identical with nature but also was higher than nature or transcendental towards it. If Narekatsi accepted only God's and nature's, God's and man's sameness then the man's (man=all material beings, the whole nature) aspiration for God, for absolute perfection would be in vain, this very aspiration is the main tendency of Narekatsi's *Book of Lamentations*. The poet wrote:

By what measure of weight shall the balance between

the creator and the clay be set?

You remain in these things infinite and non-examinable,

good in all things, having no part in the wrath

of darkness; therefore, far less are the number of

stars than your greatness,

for you called them into existence from nothing

by merely pronouncing their names.

Or take the mass of the earth floating in air,

created from nothing, from which you established the dry land of earth. (Pr. 29, B)

Thus, nature (stars, the earth) is too small in comparison with God's greatness.

Chaloyan wrote: "Pantheism is opposed to creationism; the latter rejects the existence of God as a person (anthropomorphism) and the creation of nature by him" (p. 362). However, God was both personal and finite and impersonal and infinite to Narekatsi; in this way, anthropomorphism was rejected. Besides, nature both depends (created by) and does not depend on God so that it would be strictly biased "to charge Narekatsi with" either pantheism or creationism. Narekatsi solved the main philosophical problem from the standpoint of Neo-Platonism but displaying some kind of distinctiveness and ability of dialectical thinking. It is manifested in the following: the whole system of Narekatsi's worldview was a chain of negations (an upward, spiral movement) the main concepts of which were 'God' and 'Nature' (= man). Among scholars of Narekatsi studies, Prof. M. Mkryan was the first to pay attention to the specific structure and the process of development of the content of the *Book of Lamentations*. He wrote: "The inner strong dramatic statements and the progress of *Narek* were first of all conditioned by its ideological essence and nature. As a mystic, Narekatsi sought to be worthy of seeing God and to make his human nature be mixed with and join the divine nature, his appearance resemble God's real appearance. He hopefully expressed the idea in the poem that Christ had appeared for him too so that he would be able to reach his greatest desire of happiness through Christ... This self-reassurance is just a ring of the long chain of tragic feelings. The more the mystic tried to reach and join God the more it seemed to him that God was leaving him, but the more distant God was the stronger became the desire to reach him; but this feeling lasted only a second, then he overcame despair: the hope to survive reappeared... *Though man can overcome some of those who oppress him, at the same time he empowers those who condemn him to failure.* So again tantalizing feelings, again the poet's bitter conclusion that he had been created to suffer and would never have inner peace... Self-scourging should be given up, thoughts should be separated from the thick fog of hesitation and one should start building an edifice of faith. One should be tied to God by the bonds of hope and love... The problem was that the poet's inner peace did not last long: his emotions and feelings, like the ebb and flow, a violent storm and tranquility of foaming waters, succeeded each other, moreover in contrast to this example from nature, they were always at their peak, always with new details and embodied in stronger and newer ways of expression. Fear and lament of loss, tantalizing hesitations, hope and belief of reaching happiness pushed one another like waves, replaced one another, and the larger and stronger one of them became the larger and stronger grew the other.

The dramatic development of the poem was created this way"⁷⁷.

We quote this long extract in order to ground the chain of negations in Narekatsi's views: 1) As opposed to each other, the concepts of *God* and *Man* are distinguished: God is eternal, infinite,

⁷⁷ M. Mkryan, *Grigor Narekatsi*, pp. 177-188.

united (non-controversial) and man (nature) is temporary, finite, controversial, etc. 2) Man (Nature) is not only temporary and finite but also eternal and infinite, and God is not only eternal but also temporary. Then they are differentiated again. 3) Man (nature) is relatively eternal and temporary, infinite and finite to the extent of human possibilities, and God is absolutely eternal and temporary to the extent of God's possibilities. In the next phase, this difference is negated by a new level of sameness. 4) *I turn to you for forgiveness not on the meager human scale, but with the full undiminishing measure of loving kindness shown toward us by our Savior Jesus Christ* (Pr. 18, A). Narekatsi puts the question of man's salvation, return, identification with God not only to the extent of human (nature's), possibilities relatively, but also absolutely, to the extent of God's *full undiminishing measure*. That is why the poet demands: *Work a miracle upon me divinely* (Pr. 58, A).

Thus, man is eternal and temporary not only relatively but also absolutely, and so is God.

In this way, the sameness is negated, sublated by a difference and vice versa.

During the differentiation, the genius poet and thinker gives way to despair and criticizes himself because God is kind and he is evil, and thus a man cannot be God; when thinking of sameness, he reassures himself again, becomes courageous and proud, then becomes upset, then happy again, gives way to despair and reassures himself: *I take heart a bit, then feel yet more abandoned. I gear up and then as quickly slacken* (Pr. 71, B). Thus, the mutual negation, transmutation of the phases of identification and differentiation is manifested in a mixture of transmutations of moods and emotional states, being a storm of feelings and thoughts. That is why it would be more correct to term the whole system of Narekatsi's views as literary-philosophical because thought and emotion are interdependent, transmuted into each other here. During the differentiation the thought (that man is not God, eternal) stirs up emotions and inner burning, and these psychological tortures make Narekatsi go deep into thought again and find a solution; sublimate the difference by sameness. The result is the idea of the sameness of God and man (nature), which is achieved through zigzags of thought, and this idea evokes good mood, positive emotions, thus thought becomes the cause of emotion and vice versa.

Another important fact should be noted: Narekatsi or the lyrical hero does not always give way to despair; on the contrary, during one of the phases of differentiation, however striking and odd it may seem, he is pleased with the idea that man is not God. Realizing that to be God means to be deprived of everything that is human and earthly, and to be absolutely eternal means to be absolutely temporary too, Narekatsi prefers to live *among the feeling, breathing beings destined for the dark grave* (Pr. 30, B), to be relatively eternal as it means relative temporariness. Thus, the great poet prefers the earthly life for the divine, heavenly life. This is his great achievement,

the heroic deed of the representative of Renaissance. This moment is again sublated, and he again seeks to reach God, but being negated, this idea does not lose its true value for Narekatsi.

Thus, Narekatsi was probably the only medieval thinker who had come to the idea of the sameness and difference, transmutation, mutual determination of these two origins, their being the origin and end for each other. Before Narekatsi, almost all thinkers (both idealist and materialist) had tried to infer “everything” from the “unity” and again to reduce the first one to the latter. The only exception was Lucretius Carus. He was the first to find out that if one origin derived from another one (everything) and was again reduced to it, in the same way the contrary view could be claimed: the second one could originate from the first one and be reduced to it.

Narekatsi did not only come to the idea of the sameness and difference, transmutation of these two origins (God and nature for Narekatsi) but he also developed, deepened and enriched its content. For Narekatsi, it was not only an outcome, a conclusion of cognitive search but also a precondition, pre-beginning and pre-principle of that search. The idea had become a special, unique system, a teaching, though based on idealism, mainly.

By the way, there can arise a question: as these two origins are identical and transmuted into each other, both of them are the beginning and the end of the other, what is Narekatsi’s idealism manifested in? The thing is that in parallel with the identification of these two origins, Narekatsi differentiated them, and during this very differentiation God was admitted as primary and initial; regarded as the spiritual origin.

As to the second aspect of the main problem, the relationship of nature and mind (by the way, Narekatsi also touched upon the relationship of God and mind), the cognoscibility of the world, Narekatsi handled and solved it in a specific way too—through different phases of sublation. God can be known through knowing nature (nature in all its manifestations, objects and phenomena, man) (here Narekatsi was influenced by the fifth-century philosopher David Anahaght, however Narekatsi’s epistemology was not confined only to it); here Narekatsi’s new and progressive natural or more precisely, natural-philosophical views are manifested. Besides, he also found it possible to know God directly.

Thus, we should say in advance that Narekatsi raised and solved ontological and epistemological problems, and it was not accidental that he called his main work *Book of Life*, considering it as a source for knowing all and a guide for taking the right path of life.

1. The Definition of God

God and His Attributes (Qualities)

There is no reason to agree with the viewpoint that Narekatsi “did not try to prove God’s existence, know his essence either by reason or by sense or by the authority of religious dogmatism, or to claim any truth about him. And did not try to define either God or divine categories...”

First of all, a few words about the proof of God’s existence. In order to prove God’s existence Narekatsi made use of the so-called a posteriori method, which came from Neo-Platonism, particularly from David Anhaght in the Armenian reality who claimed that the invisible became known through the visible, and the unknown through what was known. Consequently, the recognition and confirmation of God’s existence depended on the recognition and confirmation of the existence of nature. As this dependence was both complete and incomplete for Narekatsi; God and nature were both identical and different, both did and did not coincide –

1) God became completely known through knowing nature; through the confirmation of the existence of nature, God’s existence was wholly confirmed and 2) God was not wholly known through knowing nature (God is above nature, and nature is his attribute), the confirmation of the existence of nature was the partial confirmation of God’s existence...

Narekatsi grounded the existence of the “true being” with several arguments: the first that logically came from the system of his views was the following: *if there is the created, an outcome, diversity then there ought to be a creator, the only cause, the beginning of all beginnings.*

Secondly, *God is the guarantor of giving and taking breath (=life-S. P.) who there is no movement, no progress without* (Pr. 12, B). It should be added that there is no unity of opposites, no calm and peace to the excitement and agitations without God. That was why Narekatsi considered every movement a reminder of God, of his existence. He wrote:

You who shake the limitless density of the land

like a small sailboat tossing on the waves,

by which you put all creatures on notice

that you are decisively in control,

holding the whole world in your hand (Pr. 63, C).

Thirdly, *God has determined the order in the cycle of creatures, consequently the order of their change, emergence and destruction, their succession, location and regularity bear witness to God's existence too.*

Fourthly, *all beings in nature have different degrees of perfection; man is more perfect than the irrational animate beings (endowing me with ingenuity, setting me apart from the animals) and the latter are more perfect than the inanimate beings.* So, there is absolute perfection which non-perfect beings strive for:

But those who have healthy organs are not in need of a physician's care,

and those with good vision have no need of a guide,

and those who are well off do not beg at the doors of the wealthy,

and those who are well fed do not wait for crumbs of bread from the table,

and those who lead a saintly life are not needy of mercy (Pr. 59, B)

If creatures were absolutely perfect, they would not need absolute perfection, it would be unnecessary, and their imperfectness conditions God's existence: *that you might be called God.* (Pr. 46, B)

He grounded God's existence with these and other arguments, but as we see from the last one, he had some doubt in it as well, especially as he tried to prove that God was not only everything but also nothing, consequently he was not only a true being but also non-being.... Anyway, there was some kind of doubt and the great thinker allowed himself a far-going liberalism.

The cognoscibility of God will be touched upon separately. I just want to mention here that when reading the *Book of Lamentations* only at first glance does it seem that Narekatsi did not try to define God and his categories, because the concept of God is given clearly and straightly in the very beginning and needs no explanations. In fact, this is just the initial approach. The concept of God develops throughout the whole context of the *Book of Lamentations*. Through the definition of God's separate aspects, qualities and relations, the author comes from the initial abstract (unclear) concept to a complex system (conception) of judgments and conclusions about God, this system revealing the sum of God's qualities and relations, though, as Narekatsi would himself say, not fully and completely.

Though this process, the logical development of the notion of God, its growing into a concept, was not wholly comprehended like in Hegel's works, Narekatsi proceeded from the abstract to the concrete too.

It becomes clear from the very beginning that God is one, the only one and is characterized with a range of epithets:

a) almighty, all-encompassing, long in vision, all-knowing, the most perfect, all-meaning, all-creator, the kindest, all-powerful, everywhere, all-saving, etc. b) without beginning, timeless, immeasurable, beyond quality, unchangeable, indelible, unbearable, protective, indistructible, indescribable, uncreated, boundless, unlimited, beyond knowing, intangible, shadowless (dawn), unblemished (goodness). The influence of the Corpus Areopagiticum, the use of the method of negative theology, is obvious at once. God was all-named and nameless for Narekatsi, too:

*Godhead beyond description, always good,
of the same substance, equal in honor,
beyond the flight of the wings of our thought,
higher than all examples, beyond all analogies...
who cannot be defined by name or denoted by label,
nor likened in quality, nor weighed in quantity,
nor formed by rules, nor known by kind... (Pr. 34, C)*

Narekatsi calls that 'initial' god Majestic God, Father Almighty, Exalted God.

*Father creator
awesome name, miracle performer,
shuddering voice, familiar exclamation,
embracing thought, splendid effect, severe command,
essence beyond examination, existence beyond words,
reality beyond measure, might beyond thought,
good will, limitless dominion,
immeasurable greatness, exalted beyond comprehension,
quantity beyond weighing, supremacy beyond surpassing. (Pr. 28, B)*

Father is the only beginning, the first cause who has himself been *perfection* before creating anything:

...for before you created everything,

before the creation of the heavens

with the immortal choir of praise and

the earthly thinking beings,

you yourself in your perfection were already glorified. (Pr. 34, J)

Father begat the Son, as a ray emanating from the paternal light; the Spirit proceeded from Father too. To all appearance, this was the reason that Father was proclaimed as a Great God, which emphasized that Father was the cause, the origin, the first cause of the Son and the Spirit. Father's superiority over the Son (the Spirit) is obvious, the Son and the Spirit are *exalted forever, in the glory of (your) great Father's essence.* (Pr. 67, D).

Thus, the Son and the Spirit are differentiated, separated from Father, i.e. Narekatsi makes a distinction between the persons: the Father creates everything through the Son (living Word) and forms through the Spirit (Pr. 34, D). The Son's domination is the physical, material sphere and however striking it may seem, the Son *is broken and distributed in individual parts, that all may be collected in the same body with him as head* (Prayer 47, B), and the Spirit's domination is confined to the spiritual sphere, the Spirit is the sower of spiritual seeds. This idea is marked both in the *Book of Lamentations* and in the lays.

The difference of God's persons is sublated by their sameness, 'congruence', unity:

Beneficent, almighty, awe-inspiring God,

good Father, charitable donor of mercy,

whose very name heralds the good news of

your grandeur, compassion and fatherly affection,

you are gentle even toward the bitter and discontented.

Your Son is with you, Son who is like you,

whose hand is as strong as yours,

whose awesome reign is as eternal as yours,

who's exalted as Your creation.

So is the Holy Spirit of your truth,

that flows from you without end,

the perfect essence of existence

and eternal being, is equal to you

in all things, reigning with the Son

in equal glory.

Three persons, one mystery,

separate faces, unique and distinct,

unified into one by congruence

being of the same holy substance and nature,

unconfused and undivided,

one in will and in action.

None is greater, none is lesser. (Pr. 13, A)

Narekatsi even created a word to express the trinity: <<թիվ միշտ եղակի, եղենակի փառք>>-
'always one in number, triune glory'. The features and relationships attributed to one person refer to the others too:

I do not glorify the Father by disparaging the Son.

Nor is the Holy Spirit subordinated by naming the Son first.

I hold the Trinity equal in glory and creation (Pr. 33, E).

Narekatsi seems to have indirectly rejected one of the neo-platonic views, the view concerning the dependence between the persons (Father→ Son →Spirit), in this part, but he did not reject the dependence; he just as well admitted the independence, self-sufficiency and sameness of persons.

Thus, God had three phases of existence and perception for Narekatsi:

1. Initial phase-united God, Father Almighty
2. Differentiation-separation of the Son and the Spirit, emergence, outflow, separation.
3. Trinity- sameness, unity of the persons.

Expressing the interrelations of the persons, Narekatsi displayed antinomic thinking: in relation to Father, the Son (the Spirit too) did and did not come into existence, did and did not have (was self-existent) an origin and cause, was and was not separate and independent, was finite and infinite, etc.

“Fatherhood but not priority of the Father as the cause of the Son,” wrote Narekatsi. The author was well aware of that the cause was the beginning of the outcome and was prior to it but did not express the idea that the Father was the origin of the Son or greater than the Son on purpose (beware of his contemporaries). And it does not mean that he did not admit the difference between the Father and the Son, the Father’s priority over the Son (and the Spirit) or rejected the Son’s dependence on the Father. He rejected the view that admitted the dependence only; the difference and the Father’s priority over the Son; he supported the view that the Father was and was not greater than the Son, was the origin and just the contrary (the end), the Son did and did not have (was self-existent) an origin and cause. This last view of attributing two opposite features to the same thing was expressed in his antinomic judgments, particularly, that the Father was the cause of the Son but was not prior to him. Those antinomies were resolved during the sublation of the sameness and difference (of the Father, the Son and the Spirit):

In the case of difference the Father is the cause, origin of the Son and is prior to him; in the case of sameness, as the Son is identical with the Father, the Father is not his cause and origin.

It follows from this that the Son (the Spirit) was and was not begotten of the Father, did and did not have (self-existent) an origin: *Being (God) was not being, the existent came into existence but already existed* (Էն Էին անէն եղանի եղակ եղելի) (Ode to Revelation). But the Son (the Spirit) as a God and identical with the Father was also self-existent: *God comes from himself, always from God*, i.e. the Son comes forth from the Father (*always from God*) different from and meanwhile identical with him, he comes from himself. And the Father begetting the Son, begot (brought forth) himself and at the same time somebody different from him.

The Son and the Father are different and identical, separated, isolated, far from each other and at the same time joined, united, close:

One of three glorified persons equal in power and awe,

*who descended from on high to here below,
who was indeed by nature indistinguishable
from those below,
never relinquishing the throne of glory (Pr. 34, E).*

The Son descended from on high, moved away from the Father, not separating from the Father and *he ascended into heaven on high, sat in splendor upon the throne bequeathed to him from the beginning, equal with his Father, who he had never separated from.*

In this way, the Son returned to the *fatherly embrace* from which he had not pulled away. And if he had not pulled away then it is useless to speak of his return, God's great salvation, or if he returned how could he have not moved away, been alienated and separated? In this case Narekatsi did not deny the Son's being alienated, separated, humbled, he was only against acknowledging that separation and admitted the unity together with separation—the Son was and was not separated, was and was not presented (*cloaked in blinding light*), did and did not return, was and was not saved.

*Father of compassion, God of the universe,
creator of everything in heaven and on earth
except the only begotten Word, through whom
all things exist, creator and giver of breath to all things
except for the consubstantial Holy Spirit,
through whom you formed all else. (Pr. 34, D)*

If the Father Almighty the creator of everything, is the God of the universe without the Son and the Spirit (except the Word..., except the Spirit...) then why is it emphasized in the same place that the Father Almighty owns, creates, forms everything and is everyone's God through the Son and the Spirit? It is a paradox but as Pushkin said, "a genius is the friend of paradoxes."

If the Father is almighty without the Son and the Spirit then he does not need them; meanwhile, it is said that he needs them as he has created and formed everything through them. In the same way the Son and the Spirit depend on the Father as they have originated from the Father, the latter is their "first cause" and at the same time, they are not dependent but independent and self-

existent, equally eternal as their Parent. It should also be noted that God the Father was glorified in his perfection in the first phase of his existence when he had not yet been divided into three persons, not only before the creation of the heaven and earth but also before separation and differentiation of the persons. Narekatsi did not mention it in the *Book of Lamentations*; it just follows from his judgments that the Father Almighty is the God (creator) of the universe *except the Word..., except the Spirit...*

Strikingly, Narekatsi did not spare even the Father Almighty and attributed dependence to him too:

the Father would be diminished

if he did not have the power of the Word

or if he did not have the Holy Spirit and

were speechless,

lifeless and deprived of any power to command. (Pr. 34, H)

But then immediately after saying this, he marked the mutual dependence of the Son and the Spirit on the Father:

And the Word, if it were not known by

the name of the Father,

would be abandoned like some orphan or just

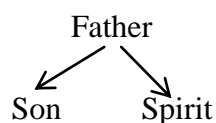
another mortal being.

Similarly the Holy Spirit, if not commissioned

by its cause,

would be vagabond, an unruly wind.

Thus, if the following dependence is seen among the persons during the differentiation,



at the moment of identification the Son's (the Spirit's) and Father's relationship acquires a richer content: it is expressed by the persons' interdependence and interconditionality. It should be noted that Narekatsi claimed the interdependence of the Son and the Spirit for the purpose of the later justification of the interdependence of God and Nature. That was why Narekatsi put the stress on the sameness and interdependence. He did not reject the dependence of the Son on the Father but he rejected the view, the approach which admitted only the dependence and separation without accepting their interdependence and sameness:

*But if one presumes in a refutation
to snatch the Father from his Word,
on the ground that there was a time when
the Word was not,
believing that such speculations exalt
the sublime greatness of the divine,
or if one subordinates the Spirit which proceeds forth
on the ground that it is not spiritual by nature,
thereby introducing an alien being or some
unstable mixture
into the pure and sublime unity of the Holy Trinity,
we must reject such persons from our midst.
We must drive them away in disgrace
with our confession of faith
like a stoning of fierce demons or vicious beasts,
and cast a curse upon their devilish lot,
shutting the gates to the church of life in their face. (Pr. 34, I)*

* * *

Incorporeal and incarnate. However strange may it seem, God was both incorporeal and corporal (material) for Narekatsi proceeding from the logic of the sublation of the sameness and difference of God and nature (man). Narekatsi came to this idea indirectly. He began with the consideration of the Son's nature. Clergymen's disputes on Monophysite and Dyophysite problems, particularly between the Armenian and the Georgian Churches, were still urgent in the 10th century, and naturally Narekatsi did not avoid those questions and he showed his attitude towards them. And as an outcome of the Armenian Christian environment, he was really the proponent of Monophysitism, but his approach was not confined only to it. Narekatsi displayed uniqueness in these issues too, following the general logic of his views. He seemed to synthesize those two viewpoints, of course, accepting Monophysitism as the primary one. First, it should be noted that this issue, as all religious-Christian dogmas, was of wider theoretical-philosophical importance to him; it exceeded dogmatic bounds and became closely tied to the main issues of ontology, becoming a type of the latter.

The Son's being Monophysitic or Dyophysitic expresses the relationship, sameness and difference of the two beginnings, the spiritual and physical (God and nature (=man), divine and human. Narekatsi did not reject the difference and the sameness of the divine and human natures, he was only against the view that the divine and human natures were only different or only identical (united). He rejected the Dyophysitism (according to which God has two different natures – divine and human), and the Monophysitism (according to which the Son has only one nature; the human nature is identical with the divine one, so the Son has only one nature) separately, and supported the two of them together, as he admitted the difference and the sameness of the divine and the human natures simultaneously. More exactly, Narekatsi did not concentrate on one of the views, regarding only one of them as a final truth; he tried to show the incompleteness of each through sublations. His ultimate aim was the chain of the endless sublations of opposite and common viewpoints (judgments, concepts), sameness (unity) and difference, divine and human, God and nature (man), the incorporeal and corporal. During those sublations the rich content of the endless truth (sublated on the basis of idealism) was revealed.

Only on this basis it is possible to realize why Narekatsi claimed:

the Son 1) is God, he is not human, 2) is God and human, 3) is absolutely God and human, 4) is absolutely and relatively God and human (i.e. he is God and human not only divinely but also humanly, to the extent of human possibilities, as God is almighty...). The unity of these opposite viewpoints, the unicity of the solution to the issue of Dyophysitism and Monophysitism by Narekatsi is revealed only on the basis of his entire ontological teaching.

Thus, Narekatsi admitted that the Son was incorporeal and corporal. Strikingly, Narekatsi indirectly contradicted the Orthodox Christianity in regard to the issue of the Son's

corporeality, more exactly in regard to the time, duration and kind of incarnation. Narekatsi wrote:

... formed from an incorruptible mixture

like us in body,

in the manner of the soul with body;

as a gold with fire,

or to put it more plainly,

light in the air, neither transformed nor separated.(Pr. 34, E)

The incarnate Son *did not exist in time*, i.e. he became human outside of time, which meant 1) absolutely finite, 2) absolutely infinite, eternal, to Narekatsi. Accordingly, the Son is also eternally corporal: this corresponds to Narekatsi's essence completely. The Son has been incorporeal and corporal outside of time from the beginning. The Son has been formed from an incorruptible mixture and is unchangeable and inseparable (united). In this way, Narekatsi laid the foundation for the following conclusion: *Nature is identical with God, consequently it is eternal (timeless), unchangeable and united*. But before drawing the conclusion a chain of judgments concerning the very conclusion should be considered:

if the Son as incarnate God is eternal and unchangeable then it refers to the whole Godhead as in the case of sameness a feature attributed to one of the persons refers to the others; to the Trinity as well, consequently the whole Godhead is not only incorporeal but also corporal (material).

Personal and impersonal

Finite and infinite

Specific and general

God is incorporeal and corporal, personal and impersonal (subject and object), finite and infinite. He is infinite and boundless, *in the substance of existence unto the ends of the earth, the beginning of everything and the completion of everything in all ways* (Prayer 41, B). As such, God is unbounded, unbearable, all-encompassing space, *undiminishing grace, inexhaustible treasure: who is permanently presented and yet remains intact, who is wholly in each and every part...* (Pr. 47, B).

Narekatsi saw the unity of diversity in God and called him like this: *you are the whole in all and sundry*. (Pr. 23, D)

But God is not only impersonal but also personal, not only infinite but also finite: in the first case anthropomorphism is rejected and it is confirmed in the second one. The personal God orders, he is mighty, awesome, can hear, see, gets angry, forgives, etc. As an impersonal origin, he is infinite, unlimited while he is finite and limited as a personal origin: *I fled from the balancing bounds of your will*. In the first case, addressing God he says: *you are nowhere, yet without you there are no bounds*; in the second case he says: *for if we flee you come after us*.

Space. It is striking but Narekatsi attributed not only temporal but also spatial quality to God, seemingly, proceeding from God's being not only incorporeal but also corporal. At first, of course he admitted that God was devoid of space while nature was endowed with it. This is seen during the first phase of differentiation, in the phase of identification both of them are endowed with it. God is absolute and relative space and is not. God is absolutely finite (limited) space, i.e. he is devoid of space absolutely and at the same time is absolutely infinite (nowhere, unbounded): *you are nowhere, yet without you there are no bounds*; *God neither occupies space, nor appears in a place* and meanwhile is *in the substance of existence unto the ends of the earth*. God does and does not have his own place (*God withdrawing in anger, returns in mercy*). In the case of identification with any separate, temporal, relative being, God is also endowed with a relatively limited and unlimited space. It is obvious that any human being is a relatively finite and infinite space for the man's finiteness is relative; he is also infinite and whole, has everything in him and is in everything but to the extent of human possibilities, relatively; consequently man occupies a relatively limited and unlimited space:

I have risen up, raising my hands with my broken cup, strutting like a swaggering peacock, but then curling back into myself, as if rejected (Pr. 20, E).

However, man's inner scales are unlimited, unbounded too, man is internally a hierarchy of "sins", manifestations of human soul, though that infinity is also limited, relative within human abilities. But in the case of identification with God that infinity (as well as finiteness) is viewed as absolute too. Man (any being different from God) does and does not occupy a certain (limited) space, is and is "not here"⁷⁸.

Time. God's reign is timeless. By timeless Narekatsi understood 1) eternal, absolutely infinite time, duration including the present, the past and the future; 2) at the same time absolutely finite time, duration, i.e. absence of time, timelessness.

⁷⁸ How similar it is to the uncertainty principle of quantum physics, to the dualism of electrical particles.

Thus in one case time was not viewed as God's attribute (time did not exist: *present non-existent*) and God had created it: *setting time in motion and all that takes shape as the time unfolds*; in another case time was viewed as a universal attribute and as such was uncreated. The same refers to the space and motion.

Narekatsi always stated that God was eternal and suddenly he wrote in Prayer 84 that he lasted as long as a short duration of a feeling (զգայութիւն տևողութիւն). Is God such a short duration? Then it is not accidental that according to the *Book of Lamentations*, God does not need time to create everything, to save, to renew, more exactly he creates and returns everything timelessly, i.e. during absolutely finite and infinite time.

Structure. Is it necessary to speak of structure in regard to God? I think it is, because first God was proclaimed as absolutely finite and infinite, bounded and endless; accordingly proceeding from the first qualities God is non-structural (in this case it is useless to speak of structure) and proceeding from the second ones God is structural as all (the invisible and visible infinite in number) count for and in him.

For Narekatsi the concepts of structure and non-structure corresponded to controversiality and non-controversiality. In the first phase of differentiation, nature (man) was considered controversial, structural and God non-controversial, non-structural; in the phase of identification, both nature and God were structural and non-structural. Then they were again differentiated: God was endowed with these attributes to the extent of his possibilities, absolutely, while nature (man) - relatively and in the next identification phase both of them were structural and non-structural both absolutely and relatively.

God, as a supreme being, has all beings in him. So when it is said the *ruler of all* we should understand not only that God, as a supreme subject, rules all but also that he is an object and has all in himself.

God has an absolutely finite structure, i.e. is non-structural⁷⁹.

In this case, in the process of the creation of the whole world, God creates structure, i.e. it is outside of God but meanwhile God has an absolutely infinite, unbounded structure. Here structure is viewed as a universal attribute (for all beings), and its creation is out of the question, God's attribute is uncreated, is an eternal phenomenon too.

⁷⁹ It reminds of geometrical point which is immeasurable too, does not have length, height, width, is, in fact, devoid of space and is non-structural, but line, plane (surface) and space (volume) stem, are created from it...

What kind is God's absolute, infinite, eternal structure?

Narekatsi has displayed quite an interesting system-structural approach. At the level of God's structure dominant is the absolute determination and at the same time absolute indetermination, in other words God's structure is in absolute order and disorder. Because of the destruction of an element, even a smallest attribute, this structure does and does not diminish (change).

In Prayer 46 Narekatsi asked in whose image man had been created and answered in God's image, then he spoke of man's structure and interconnection of his attributes:

*You are assembled of 360 parts and five senses,
the number of the days of the year,
and no aspect of your physical being remains invisible
to your sight or unstudied by your mind.*

*For some parts are thick and strong,
some are small and others necessary,
some are sturdy but sensitive,
some are sublime, important and noble,
some are necessary but humble,
and the explanation of these things is engraved on you,
wretched soul of mine, as on a nonerasable monument,
And like the elements of time
and the continuous train of days around the year,
by some inner law these parts function
in unerring and inalterable order.*

*Another spiritual image,
tied to the bonds of love uniting the church,
is also reflected within you.*

And without close relation among those parts –

the great in harmony with the lowly
under the same yoke –
the assembled body
established in the name of Christ would be impaired,
as with the cutting off or loss of an unruly organ,
infecting the body,
Something is lost in body structure;
the abode of man's feeling,
and the usual shape of the person undergoes
some disfigurement.
And with the uniquely miraculous structure
You are the living image of God... (C)

The man's structure resembles God's structure but it refers not to the sameness but to the difference. God's structure is absolute, man's structure is relative, accordingly the existence of every attribute in God's absolutely harmonic structure is necessary, is determined, and even the loss of the smallest element results in *disfigurement*, i.e. God's structure will diminish. But at the same time Narekatsi claimed: *if you destroy us, judging us by our deeds, your glory will not be diminished* (Pr. 48, H), thus every element, component is so indeterminate that in the case of its destruction nothing will be lost from God. In God's structure all beings are and are not strictly, absolutely dependent on (determined by, subject to) one another (all).

In God's structure all beings (components), the large and small, the whole and the part (ruler and the ruled) are identical and different absolutely (relatively too); they are identical as "are united under the same yoke", i.e. are endowed with a common property, the property of being a constituent part of God's structure. However different all beings are, they are identical for God, are equally his components, his "servants" but anyway all beings are strictly different, every being, with its uniqueness and peculiarity, is an indispensable part of God's structure. Thus in God's structure every being is absolutely unique and sole and at the same time is not.

Speaking of structure, it is necessary to touch upon Narekatsi's views on the interrelation of the whole and the part. In this concern, he developed ancient thinkers' principle "all in the whole". God is absolutely and relatively part and a whole, so is the nature (man). Following the logic of Narekatsi's judgments it turns out that God is the unity of everything, God is all but in every part God is *the completion of everything in all ways*. In this way, the Supreme Being is an amazing wholeness. Being all himself and including all, he is completely in that all, moreover in every part of that all. The absolute unity consists of absolute unities. Man, every being, every element of a being are in God, are God's parts but meanwhile God is in man, is the *beginning of everything*, so every being, every element of a being are not only in everything (components of everything) but also everything is in every being, in every element of a being, in its structure. Part is in part, part is in the whole and the whole is in the part, the whole is in the whole: this brings to the transmutation, interdependence, sameness and difference. It is easy to say that part and the whole are identical and different, are transmuted into each other; but this leads to astonishing, deep and "monstrous" judgments about structure: *I in all, and all in me* (Pr. 72, C), all (society, man as an individual) is in me and I am in all (*my sin and lawlessness dwell in me I am worn away by them*). Not only every part, the beginning of everything, is in everything but also everything is in every part, thus the absolute big (whole) and the small (part) are identical, the finite and infinite are identical, furthermore these opposite features are attributed to God, to nature (man) and to every being. All beings and everything count in God's. It has already been said that all are identical at the level of God's structure: *the ruler of all equally; you are the sum of all infinities, the solid is fluid for you, and the fluid is solid*. But all beings are also different for God, consequently he does not rule over all equally, all the beings are included in God's structure to different extents. It follows from the sameness of all beings that all are God's immediate components that is why God (the Supreme Being encompassing and ruling over all, the unity of all) is unreachably distant (=absolute – S. P.) and immediately close (absolutely immediate- S. P.) to every being. Every being is God's component absolutely – directly and indirectly. The first indicates that God's structure is 1) HOMOGENEOUS (as all components are identical) and NON-HIERARCHIC (all the components (beings) are not dependent on one another; every being is directly God's component),

And the second indicates that it is 2) MULTILAYERED (as all the components are different) and HIERARCHIC (as all depend on one another; every being is God's component indirectly, through all). The hierarchy is the following: divine (heavenly, incorporeal, shadowless) light → corporal light (shadowy light, identical with nothing, primordial substance) → four elements → diversity of inanimate beings → animate beings → irrational beings ("soul of an animal", i.e. animals which are irrational by nature) → rational animal, i.e. the human.

Here we should also dwell on the absolute and relative directness and indirectness of God's component in the second stage, the stage of sameness, as well as the necessity and contingency, infinity and finiteness of components included in God's structure.

Speaking of God's structure it is necessary to dwell upon a significant aspect. It has been mentioned that God is controversial and non-controversial, more precisely a unity of opposites. It particularly concerns the Trinity (the whole Godhead). *The persons, separate faces, unique and distinct are unified into one by congruence* in the Trinity and as such, God is a *felicitous balance and equality*. Speaking of man's controversial nature, Narekatsi wrote in Prayer 86:

You combined opposites in the make-up of man,

a little gravity, a little levity,

on the one hand coolness, on the other heat,

so that by keeping opposites in BALANCE,

we might be called JUST.

So *felicitous balance and equality* refer to God's opposites as God is absolutely just and man's structure was created in God's image. Apparently, Narekatsi meant that the Father Almighty united in himself the Son and the Spirit as his eternal, absolute opposites, especially as the Father was the origin of both of them; coming and deriving from the Father, the Son and the Spirit did not move away from him, always stayed in the Father's embrace.

Movement and rest. From the very beginning, Narekatsi had been attributing rest and movement, non-changeability and changeability to God, *undisturbable calm, indelible seal, undeceiving call and sincere course*. Rest and non-changeability were, of course, initial, primary in his system; they were classified as "positive" qualities while movement and change were considered as "negative". Defining God, Narekatsi deduced the "negative" features from the "positive" ones and did the contrary when defining the man (nature). Through some efforts of dialectical thinking Narekatsi deduced and claimed that God also moved and changed.

In the phase of differentiation of God and man, God was calm, unchangeable and nature moved, changed but in the next, identification phase he claimed that as God and nature were identical then both nature and God had the same qualities, i.e. both of them moved, were immovable and unchangeable. God's movement and changeability was also deduced in another way: Narekatsi regarded movement as the feature of life and existence (movements of life) and immovability as

the feature of death and non-existence (immovable and breathless death). And when he came to the sameness of existence and non-existence, he came to the sameness of movement and rest; so God was both movable and calm, but, as God was *almighty* he ought to be also movable or he would lose the status of *almightiness*.

However, Narekatsi did not concentrate on that phase of sameness and sublated it again by difference. So, attributing movement and change to God, he thought that it differed from the movement of nature (man); the movement and rest of nature are relative and God's movement and rest are absolute (uninterrupted process, movement). In the next identification phase, absolute and relative movement and rest were attributed to both nature and God; God is identical with nature and any individual being (God is in everything, in every part), consequently any relative, temporary, private movement is identified with absolute, permanent, universal movement. Our every movement reminds us of God.

2. Nature

Nature and Its Attributes (Qualities)

The sameness and difference of God and nature has already been mentioned. On the basis of that sameness and difference Narekatsi deduced "positive" attributes from negative ones when defining God's qualities, and he treated nature the other way around, first attributing negative qualities to it (dependence, causality, temporariness, limitedness, degradation, movement, change, etc.), then deducing positive ones from them (independence, self-causality or non-causality, eternity, infinity, rest, non-changeability, etc.).

Space. In the phase of differentiation, limited, finite space was attributed to nature. As such, nature was caused, created (by God) while in the phase of sameness unlimited, infinite, endless space was attributed to nature.

Thus nature is both limited, has boundaries (*the ends of the earth* (Pr. 41, B)) and is the endless Universe. The unlimited space has not been caused, created (self-caused, self-existent) and is viewed as a universal phenomenon. The idea of nature being infinite comes from Origen.

Following Narekatsi's logic, we come to the idea that the unlimited and limited space of nature is absolute and relative.

In the differentiation phase, the unlimited and limited space of nature was viewed as relative and that of God as absolute, and again the question of dependence was raised. And in the phase of sameness, the space of nature was viewed as both absolutely and relatively unlimited and limited (it should be noted that limited space is not only caused, created but is also uncreated and uncaused like the unlimited space).

Thus, for Narekatsi space was also controversial and non-controversial; finite and infinite, limited and unlimited, bounded and endless; moreover, Narekatsi deepened the dialectics of the opposition of finiteness and infinity more displaying its sameness and difference, opposition and unity. The absolute finite and infinite contradicts to, is different from the relative finite and infinite but is also united and identical with it. A very deep and interesting idea is manifested here: every finite being (including man) is not only finite in space and has a limited space but is also infinite, unlimited (*I in all, and all in me* (Pr. 72, C)), furthermore he is limited and unlimited not only relatively but also absolutely, i.e. every finite being not only contradicts to and is different from nature (the endless) but is also united and identical with it.

As regards the God-Nature-Man (separate, finite being) interrelation not only man's dependence on nature (man's limitedness in relation to nature), nature's dependence on God (the limitedness of nature in relation to God) have been viewed but also their sameness, unity, independence in the case of which the three of them are viewed both as limited and unlimited, etc. In the frames of idealism even while solving this problem, Narekatsi has displayed a deep dialectics.

Time. The category of time was developed in the same way. In the phase of differentiation, nature had finite time and, as such, time was created, but in the phase of identification, infinite, endless time was attributed to nature, and such time was viewed as an uncreated and a universal phenomenon, too.

The finite and infinite time of nature is both absolute and relative too. Time has a direction, flowing from the past through the present to the future, but at the same time it has no direction; it is reversible and irreversible. By *time* Narekatsi meant the irreversible, relatively finite and

infinite time. It is obvious from the following: *setting time in motion and all that takes shape as the time unfolds* (Prayer 34, C). And by *timeless* he meant absolutely finite and infinite, reversible time, the eternity where the past, the present and the future were identical.

The reversibility and renewal of time is realized together with the reversibility and renewal of nature. Narekatsi stated that God was the renewal of the Universe, hence that renewal was eternal, absolutely reversible, as God himself was that renewal. Thus as nature is not only different from but is also identical with God, it exists not only in time, endowed with relatively finite and infinite, reversible and irreversible time, but is also absolute and timeless. Nature, as identical with God, is absolutely irreversible and finite time, meanwhile it is endowed with absolutely reversible and infinite time.

However, we cannot confine ourselves to this much; it is necessary to speak of not only the difference and opposition of absolute and relative, reversible and irreversible, finite and infinite times but also of their sameness and unity. This means that every finite being (relatively reversible and irreversible time) is not only as that; dependent on the universal being, Nature=God (absolutely reversible and irreversible time), and its constituent part, but is also identical with it, i.e. it is also absolute; the finite time is also infinite and eternal. Narekatsi said: *the present is non-existent*. The author treated that *non-existent* dialectically: it is not only utmost finiteness but also an utmost infinity. This idea is very typical of Narekatsi: man is not only a constituent part of all but also includes all: *I in all, and all in me* (Pr. 72, C).

Narekatsi tried to synthesize the ideas of the eternity of the world by Origen and finiteness of the world preached by the Christian theology.

Structure. The structure of nature is different from God's structure; it is finite, limited, temporary, and changeable, while God's structure is infinite, unlimited, eternal and unchangeable. Then follows the differentiation: the structure of nature is relative and that of God is absolute, and only in the phase of identification, they are viewed as both relative and absolute.

The structure of the world is hierarchic and non-hierarchic; at the level of that structure dominant are determination and indetermination. In regard to the level of perfection, beings have some differences: man, the rational being is higher than the irrational beings; the irrational beings are higher than the other animate beings, the latter are higher than the inanimate beings which are higher than the primordial substance (nothing without quality and quantity). So the following dependence is observed: primordial matter → inanimate beings → animate beings → irrational beings → rational being. But all beings are not only different but also identical at the level of the structure of nature. Consequently, proceeding from their sameness, the structure of nature is non-

hierarchic as there is no dependence and determination among beings (later we will discuss the existence of determination and dependence also in the case of sameness; though all beings are identical they are composed of one another. Thus, we arrive at an interesting conclusion: a thing is composed of things identical with it). Thus, the structure of nature is homogeneous and multilayered. Every being is the immediate and indirect component of that structure—indirect in the case of hierarchy and immediate in the case of non-hierarchy.

And we should not forget that directness and indirectness, hierarchy and non-hierarchy, determination and indetermination are both absolute and relative.

The Creation of the World

What was nature created out of? As an essence different from God, the world is limited and relative. Its emergence is relative too; consequently, matter out of which nature has been created, is outside of and different from nature.

Narekatsi mentioned everywhere that all beings, everything was created out of nothing (non-being, without quality or quantity). So the world has been created out of nothing, it is identical with God, and ought to count for God (everything (consequently, nothing – S. P.) counts in and for God). The fact that Narekatsi recognized two substances, God and the world, also confirms that (though one of the substances was primary, the other was secondary to Narekatsi).

Thus if “nothing” is different from the world, then it is identical with God or else “nothing” would be considered a third substance, which is unacceptable. So the world was created from God, from “nothing”. Now it is clear why Narekatsi described the process of God’s incarnation, self-alienation this way: *You were defined, the boundless one. You were measured, the non-examinable one. You focused light, the radiant one. You became human, the incorporeal one* (Pr. 34, M). Narekatsi developed the Areopagite principle “God is everything and nothing” in an indirect way, not explicitly. The world has originated from God: *everything is from you* (Pr. 4, D). God is not only the “nothing” out of which nature, the entire material diversity, all things were created but also “everything” (*you are everything and without you there are no bounds* (Pr. 23, A)) out of which everything and the whole world came into existence.

As identical with God, nature is limited and absolute. Its origination is absolute too, consequently nature is self-existent, and the thing, out of which the world (all) has come into being, has been created, is in the world and is identical with the world; nature has been created out of itself. Nature and the world as absolute, limited and as everything, have been created out

of “everything”. While “nothing” is not different from the absolute, limited nature but “counts in it”, as well as in “everything”, consequently nature has originated from itself – from “nothing”.

In short, Narekatsi brought forward the following idea: “nature as “everything” and “nothing” has originated from itself and God as such.”

How was the World Created?

God, in general, as well as each of his persons, in particular, is a finite and infinite, personal and impersonal origin. So the creation of the world has two forms 1) on the one hand, the world has been created finitely, directly, immediately, 2) on the other hand, it has been created infinitely and indirectly.

Narekatsi stated that God had created *all through Word* and in accordance with the neo-platonic tradition he meant the identification of the creation of the world with God’s Word, the incarnation of the Son by that. As we saw, Narekatsi displayed some kind of regularity in this matter, combining the viewpoints on the finiteness and infinity of God’s Word. He consistently assigned the same to the creation of the world.

To want means be able to God: as much as you want, you can do (Pr. 31, A), and being able to do something means to want: *Everything is possible for you. Since you have power, that knows no limits, and you take delight in exercising your will for good* (Pr. 86, B). Wish and ability form a unity, moreover word is identical with work (reality): *Indeed, all these are yours, Lord of mercy, not just in words, but also in reality* (Pr. 76, C). So God wished and created, said once and established the whole universe with a word. There is no duration of time between God’s word and work. God needed no time for the creation (as well as for salvation, destruction or renewal) of the universe. The creation of the universe, as well as the incarnation of God’s Word (the divine existence in general) is outside of time which means that the world was created during absolutely finite and infinite period (more precisely, infinite time); God said and immediately created all. As such, the immediately and finitely created world is viewed as a finite, non-structural, homogeneous unity in relation to God though it contains a diversity, has a hierarchic structure in its inner form: all the constituent parts of that diversity are dependent on one another: there is small and big, the part and the whole, etc. But in relation to God, before God, they are identical, *equal in honor* so much that *the solid is fluid for you, and the fluid is solid* (Pr. 53, A); the inanimate is animate and the animate is inanimate. Whatever changes take

place in that diversity, all the same, all will remain unchanged for God, a treasure created by him at once.

Narekatsi paid more attention to the direct and indirect creation of the world in his *Book of Lamentations*.

As it has already been mentioned, God's Word became flesh, material not only finitely but also infinitely. The Word, without beginning, the ray emanating from the paternal light became flesh by thickening:

You humbled yourself, the exalted one.

You became meek, the awesome one.

You were revealed, the Lord beyond words.

You were defined, the boundless one.

You were measured, the non-examinable one.

You focused light, the radiant one.

You became human, the incorporeal one. (Pr. 34, M)

Word is a ray that illumines every great mystery (Pr. 28, B). He is everywhere, in every being and what is more important, *is permanently presented and yet remains intact, is sacrificed continuously upon innumerable altars without being consumed, is wholly in each and every part... that all may be collected in the same body with him as a head* (Pr. 47, B). Thus, the world has come into being due to the self-creation of God's Word (in this case nature is not a being outside God but "counts" in God (*Will you dishonor the grandeur of your generous bounty?* (Pr. 2, E)). That self-alienation is infinite; accordingly, the world comes into existence infinitely too. Maybe this is why God is called the *renovator of the universe*. The infinity of the creation of the world is confirmed not only by the infinity of self-alienation of God's Word but also by the idea of the infinite fall of "lost souls" borrowed from Origen; that idea is frequently repeated in the *Book of Lamentations*.

The infinite creation of the world by God has its precondition – the Son's (God's Word's) boundless procession from the Father. Narekatsi tried to ground the limitlessness of God's Word only to have a basis for further deduction about the limitlessness of the origination of the world. There are no casual judgments in the *Book of Lamentations*, everything has been considered in

advance. The infinity of the origination is grounded indirectly too. Everything counts in and for God. There is *no movement, no progress* without God. That is why *every movement reminds of God* (Pr. 31, C). The lines of the Prayer 54 confirm that:

*A horse does not go straight without someone at the reins,
nor does a ship sail forth without a helmsman,
nor does a ploughshare make a furrow without a plowman,
nor does a pair of oxen move properly without a driver,
nor does a cloud float in the sky without the wind,
nor do the stars appear and disappear untimely,
nor does the sun course through the zodiac without the action of air.
Nor do I, like them, do anything except at the pleasure
of your commandments, the doer of good.*

Each of the infinite number of movements and phenomena in the universe needs God's order, his hint to take place, so God orders, hints all the time in order to set all the phenomena of the world in motion, and to realize them. For God's Word is not only finite and concise but also infinite. *You seek my return to you, and do not grow weary.* (Pr. 58, B)

In this case of the creation, God needs infinite time, and the process of the creation takes place not only directly but also indirectly, with some gradation, succession. Here Narekatsi has displayed the competence in the natural-philosophical achievements of his time and at times has put forward his own audacious ideas.

The author differentiated the following succession of the earthly existence: light → primordial matter or the four elements → inanimate beings → animate beings → rational being – the Man.

First of all, let us consider Narekatsi's views on the nature of light. The author differentiated the natural, corporal light from the divine, heavenly, incorporeal light. More precisely, Narekatsi, as a poet-thinker, made use of the words "light" and "ray" in two senses, literal and figurative. In the first sense (literal) light was used in its literal meaning, e.g. sunlight; and in the second one, it was used to make the divine, incorporeal, intangible existence definite and "visible". The fact that Narekatsi considered God as light, a ray without a shadow or shadowless sun, a sun that

never set makes it obvious that he regarded light as corporeal, material. The natural light, for instance the sunlight, touching objects, casts a shadow on them while the heavenly, divine light does not face any resistance, obstacle at all (which proves its being non-material), it illumines every great mystery, passes through all objects, enlightens them and does not cast a shadow on them.

Besides, the source of the natural light, for instance the Sun, is material, is from air, so the light is corporeal too. Moreover, the speed of the natural light is a definite duration, though short and little, anyway *is* duration, while the heavenly light has no duration, it is timeless:

What effect can a small shadow have on the light of your day, God?

How can the dusk withstand your radiance, great God?

...How long would it take your omnipotent power to

pardon my transgressions?

Not even the batting of the eye,

not the fleeting side glance,

not the speed of light...

None of these insubstantial, fleeting events or

ephemeral states is so short or instantaneous as

the disintegration, destruction and melting of the

glacier of my sins by your power God. (Pr. 74)

It was not accidental that Narekatsi considered light material; one of the Armenian authoritative thinkers – Yeznik Koghbatsi was his predecessor. The celebrated thinker of the fifth century claimed: "First, it should be noted that what is touched, felt or examined by senses is corporeal, and what does not have influence on senses is incorporeal. The element of light that is visible is corporeal, likewise are the air, the coolness of which affects the body, and fire, the heat of which affects the body".

One more fact: Narekatsi said that God had created light out of nothing. Clearly, he meant the creation of the corporeal light because the creation of the heavenly, divine light, light as God's property out of nothing is beyond consideration.

Thus, the material light, the first link of the hierarchy of the whole material diversity, has originated from nothing. The other links are derived from the first one, from the light.

Though it is told that the other links of the hierarchy, for instance the four elements, inanimate beings or the rational being, Man, have originated from nothing too, however, this procession is indirect. Direct is the procession of four elements from light and immediately from the elements arises the whole diversity of inanimate and animate. The whole material diversity, including the four elements, comes into existence due to the concentration, thickening of light.

Narekatsi made use of the teaching on the four elements slightly modifying and adjusting it to the logic of the system of his ontological views. Thus, Narekatsi did not consider the “heat”, “coolness”, “dryness” and “humidity” as the distinctive features of the four elements but the “gravity” and “weightlessness” together with the first two, attributing gravity and weightlessness to soil and air respectively and heat and coolness to fire and water. It was not a mere poetic self-will: he did it consciously, believing that the soil, with its weight and heaviness, downwardness was opposed to the weightlessness, the upward movement of the air, and water was opposed to (overcame) the heat of the fire with its coolness and humidity. In short, Narekatsi thought that those features expressed the essence, oppositions and transmutation of the four elements better. He did not admit the indelibility of the four elements. According to him, they had originated from light (and became light again) and then developed and transmuted into one another.

The medieval thinker connected the question of the emergence of the whole material diversity with the issue of the relationship between the heaven and the earth. First, the author differentiated the heaven and the earth as symbols of non-material and material respectively. In that case, the heavenly hierarchy preceded and determined the earthly hierarchy. This idea was poetically embodied in *Ode to Church and Holy Temple*. Then he also viewed the heaven as material and as such, it was identical and united with the earth. Divine (incorporeal) existence preceded the unity of the heaven and earth, as a unity of corporeals.

Thus, in relation to God’s incorporeal essence (for God), the heaven and earth are united as corporeal and identical, consequently they have emerged simultaneously. In the frames of the relationship of “the heaven (corporeal) and earth” first is the emergence of the heaven, then that of the earth. The heaven with its luminaries came into existence directly from nothing (...stars...you called them into existence from nothing) and the earth originated from the mass floating in the universe.

In mediaeval Armenia there dominated Aristotle’s view according to which the heaven and the earth had not originated from the same substance (or from the same elements), and the heaven

had originated from a pure, unmixed, unchangeable and eternal element devoid of opposites. Perhaps, Ptolemy's heavenly mechanism about the non-changeability and indestructibility of the heavens was grounded on that; and Christianity adopted that mechanism. The fourteenth-century great Armenian philosopher Hovhan Vorotnetsi supported Aristotle's viewpoint. In this concern G. Grigoryan wrote: "Vorotnetsi also gave Aristotle's justification of why 'heavenly bodies were of a different substance' Aristotle grounded this in four ways: firstly, if heavenly and earthly bodies were of the same substance their movements would be similar while celestial bodies make circular movements, and earthly bodies 'just move upward and downward and vice versa'. Secondly, the four elements change and one proceeds from the other. And if earthly and heavenly bodies were the same, earthly bodies would transform into heavenly bodies and vice versa. Thirdly, earthly bodies have opposite qualities and that is why they are subject to degradation while the same cannot be said of the heavenly substance. Fourthly, the heavenly substance does not seek to become free from the form in which it has embodied, while the elements do have such an aspiration: they seem to be trying to become free from the form in which they have embodied and transform into a new one. This process is permanent; the old is destroyed and the new is created on its basis, while in the heaven no such thing is observed.

Narekatsi's non-standard thinking could not agree with this viewpoint. First of all, the transmutation of the forms and types of the whole material diversity, the formation of the unity of opposites was a universal law for him; if something is corporal it is controversial and is subject to degradation. Proceeding from this viewpoint, the existence of such a kind of substance, an element which was not subject to change and degradation was inadmissible. So the heaven, with its luminaries, was subject to qualitative changes and even to degradation. According to Narekatsi, the heaven and earth were transmuted into each other: *From the heaven to earth, from the earth to heaven, descent to earth and ascent into heaven on high (Ode to Church)*. It is about not only the transmutation of the heaven as incorporeal, but also as corporal; the vivid evidence of it is the image of the clash, mixture of the heaven and earth:

And then the heaven will roll up like a scroll

the earth will be shaken to its very foundations,

like billowing waves of the tempestuous sea,

that pursue each other, crash against each other and

counteract each other's force,

jolting and shaking
the foundations of the earth's thick surface
across its expanse
with forceful blows to its very core
and with thunderous sound,
laying the mountains low,
and melting the substance of stone with fire,
with all the other elements of nature:
then the heaven will be cleared in purity
and the creatures together with all their elements
will be recreated in a new form. (Pr. 79, B)

And finally, and perhaps most importantly Narekatsi denied the image of the unchangeable heaven. Heavenly bodies change, are profaned and come into existence again: *You who gather and scatter the speechless constellations, like a flock of sheep* (Pr. 63, B); *the stars appear and disappear* (Pr. 54, B).

Narekatsi also touched upon the change of the surface of the earth. According to him, the landscape of the earth was subject to change: there was a time when it was smooth, without roughness, mountains and canyons; there was a homogeneous smoothness, then because of internal and external clashes and oscillations the surface became rough and all the material diversity came into existence.

The Return, salvation of Nature (the World)

Return was one of the notions of Gr. Narekatsi's teachings. Other notions such as "salvation, forgiveness, atonement, renewal, healing, recompletion, restoration, reestablishment" and so on were ranked with return; Narekatsi gave a deeper meaning to them than the mediaeval perceptions of those notions were. Return is the opposite process of the creation, of God's self-alienation:

*And now, you who have miraculously endowed
all things with the supreme light of your goodness,
gathering as your own, the scattered treasures
and re-establishing your inheritance. (Pr. 14, D)*

It is important to find out whether the whole material world, nature, was included in that inheritance or not. Of course, the most important was the Man's return, salvation and renewal for Narekatsi but it does not mean that Narekatsi did not touch upon the issue of the return of the whole nature. The great thinker stayed true to himself in this matter too. Speaking of nature, he spoke of its return too and confirming that nature would not return, he simultaneously mentioned its ability to return. And true, Narekatsi proclaimed God as "the renovator of the universe". This judgment occupied an important place in the system of the great thinker's views and had a deep content: it followed from this judgment that God and nature were identical because God was the renovator and existence of nature.

Evidently, the renewal (recompletion) of the Universe is a kind of return, salvation.

Narekatsi mentioned God's ability to eliminate, take away, thaw, and expiate piles of sins of the whole Universe quite frequently in the *Book of Lamentations*. Moreover, God required no time for expiating the piles of sins of the whole Universe. Narekatsi continually emphasized that God was a complete salvation and saved everyone, even the most evil, made all return to him, even inanimate and irrational beings:

*You who gather and scatter the speechless constellations,
like a flock of sheep, as symbol of the hope
of life that you, Lord, with your sweet providence
dispense in your abundant mercy
even to those silent tongues who do not petition you. (Pr. 63, B)*

Narekatsi thought of not only the renewal, recompletion of the whole Universe but also the recompletion of beings and objects subject to defilement, circulation and repetition of natural phenomena: *You who vary the elements in their passing states and combine them in stable compounds (Pr. 63, p. B); the stars appear and disappear (Pr. 54, B).*

Besides, Man is the symbol of the whole material, of nature, consequently Man's return symbolizes the return of nature too: Narekatsi words about the Man's salvation, renewal should be understood in three ways: the salvation of man as an individual, of man-kind and the whole material. The thing that the man's salvation was considered the salvation of the Universe is obvious from the following: *I have all earthly ills and thus can serve as an emissary offering prayers for the whole world* (Pr.28, B); *I in all, and all in me* (Pr. 72, C). As all material beings have been created for the man, the man is the crown of the whole material diversity and the "sins", shortcomings of all of them are condensed in man, consequently everything, the whole world will be saved and survive through man's salvation.

Furthermore, Narekatsi also spoke of God's great salvation, i.e. the return of the incarnate God. And the incarnate God is identified with, symbolizes the whole Nature, consequently the incarnate God's (=Nature's) Great Salvation is the return to the Father's embrace.

Narekatsi did not only think of the return of Nature; the multisided analysis of this matter constituted an important part, section, layer of his philosophical teaching on the concept of the universal salvation.

Narekatsi differentiated the return from the creation, contrasting them with each other. First, he differentiated God's rewards from his mercy, thereby making way for the differentiation of the creation and return:

And though all rewards may be yours,

so is all your mercy,

but you are not so acclaimed for rewards as for mercy,

for the first brings glory, while the second

recognizes the effort of labor,

since rewards are compensation for merit,

but mercy is an act of generosity toward the unworthy. (Pr. 13, B)

Then he says straightly:

Indeed, no one is able to convey with human speech,

even a small part of the acts of compassion which you have shown on me, creator.

For the power to restore what has been worn-out to

its former grandeur is greater than creating anew. (Pr. 49, B)

It seems Narekatsi did not sin by saying all this, however, the discrimination of God's two (main) abilities was already a great daring in itself; it gave birth to far going judgments—at least the creation was regarded less powerful than the ability of salvation, to say nothing of the creational almightiness or omnipotence.

Let us recall once more, so if creation is the way of the differentiation, alienation (opposition) of Nature from God, then its return is the contrary; the way of identification, unification (unity). And this justifies Narekatsi's deliberateness of ranking the return higher than creation, as the great humanist was concerned with the sameness and unity of God and Nature rather than with their difference and opposition for the sameness and unity of God and Nature brought to the idea of the sameness and unity of God and the Man. Finally, there came out a unique reflection, a circulation from the sameness of God and Nature to the sameness of God and Man and vice versa. The great philosopher was mainly concerned with the issue of finding ways for the Man's salvation, return, renewal and recompletion. The second Lusavorich (Illuminator) considered that the secret of happiness and eternity was in this.

In general, Narekatsi sublated the differentiation and controversiality of any opposition by the unity of those opposite features (notions). And he managed to do it by discovering the opposite in each of the opposite features; the desired transmutation, unity, sameness of opposites and opposite features was “achieved” due to it. Thus in Prayer 31 he marked:

For sometimes in the midst of black crows

we see a flock of white doves,

and in the middle of wild, unkempt horses,

can be a tame sheep,

in the midst of beastly dogs, we may find a sacrificial lamb,

and mildness amid harshness,

perfection amid defects,

humility amid haughtiness,

truth amid lies,

simplicity amid cunning,

purity amid perversity,

kindness amid wickedness,

honesty amid depravity,

mercy amid cruelty,

repentance amid despair,

sweetness amid anger,

reconciliation amid hostility... (Pr. 31, D)

Accordingly, there is affection amid alienation, closeness amid departure, like there is reconciliation amid hostility and unity amid opposition. In Prayer 32, the poet has turned to God in the name of everyone, the exiled and the invited, the disgraced and the exalted, the rejected and the accepted. And as all, the evil and the good, the big and the small, the alien and the savior count for and in God, all are subject to return, to salvation without exception. That was why Narekatsi put the question of “*How did the follower become alienated?*” as well as how the exiled, alienated could return, join, unite and become the same.

* * *

Grigor Narekatsi tried to study, find out and discover the processes of both creation and return scientifically. In order to discover the essence of return, to reveal its deep content, he analyzed the cause and purpose of return, its ways, types and forms, as well as features.

Let us dwell upon them concisely:

The cause of the return. The cause of both the creation and return of the whole material world is God. This means that God is the subject of the process of salvation and renewal of Nature and the Universe, and Nature is the object. Thus, in the beginning we deal with the differentiation between God and Nature: the “active” and “passive” aspects of the return are distinguished, then the difference of God and Nature is sublated by sameness. That is to say, the cause of the

return, salvation and restoration is considered to be not only God but also Nature itself. Nature returns, saves and renews itself with its progress, evolution. In the next phase of differentiation God is perceived as the absolute and Nature as the relative cause of the return. In this case, God is the ultimate cause of any movement, *who there is no movement, no progress without:*

A horse does not go straight without someone at the reins,

nor does a ship sail forth without a helmsman,

nor does a ploughshare make a furrow without a plowman,

nor does a pair of oxen move properly without a driver,

nor does a cloud float in the sky without the wind,

nor do the stars appear and disappear untimely,

nor does the sun course through the zodiac without the action of air...

except at the pleasure of your commandments,

the doer of good...(Pr. 54, B)

Thus God is the ultimate, absolute cause of clouds' floating, the sun's course through the zodiac. However, the mentioned movements also have their direct, relative causes: the wind, the air, etc. Every movement, progress in nature has its direct, relative cause, which is a natural phenomenon too. Consequently, the return of Nature also has a relative cause besides its absolute, ultimate cause. Nature itself is endowed with immanent movement and sovereignty. It is not accidental that in Narekatsi's mind, the incarnate God is the cause of all movements and not only the cause of the salvation of everybody and everything, but he himself is the salvation.

The purpose of return. Nature returns to God and to itself. God is the beginning and the end of everything, consequently the ultimate purpose of all beings, and everything is to return to God. This accounts for the aspiration of all imperfect and mortal beings for absolute perfection, eternity, viz. God. The purpose of that aspiration-progress, return, salvation and renewal is to survive, be eternalized and immortalized. This is the ultimate purpose of the return. But Nature is identical with God, so Nature is the beginning and the end, the ultimate purpose, absolute perfection of all material beings which means it is all beings, their unity. Nature strives for the Nature itself.

Thus, the return of Nature is purposeful and is an end in itself. Both the creation and return as movement and change (development) have an aim (or consequence) and at the same time, they are aimless: they have no purpose or are an end in themselves, likewise the creation and return do and do not (are self-caused) have a cause. The notion of “aimless or end in itself” has a deep content. The fact that the return of Nature is an end in itself witnesses to the sameness of God and Nature (Universe), to their being self-caused and to their eternity. These two origins change, transmute into each other permanently remaining unchanged. Grigor Narekatsi was a unique thinker of the Middle Ages who had come to the idea of the transmutation, mutual determination of these two opposite substances which are a beginning and end for each other, thereby they are united and identical. Thus the creation is the way (process) of God's and Nature's differentiation and contrasting, and the return is the way of sameness, unity, and vice versa, as in the case of the creation God creates not only something different from him (Nature) but also identical with him; he creates himself (Nature). The same is with the return. Nature returns not only to something different from him (God), but also to itself. Thus, both the creation and return are the ways of differentiation and identification. In this sense, they are identical.

Means of return. Grigor Narekatsi distinguished two general means of both creation and return: word and work (the hand symbolized, implied work, action for Narekatsi). Nature is returned through word, order: even God's (also the incarnate God's, identical with Nature) one hint is enough to thaw the piles of sins of the Universe. But Nature also returns through work: through the evolution of natural phenomena, the whole material diversity which has a direction opposite to the creation.

Features, forms of return. Both the creation and return take place finitely and infinitely, directly and indirectly, necessarily and accidentally, etc. The return is a process that happens through scattering and assembling, expansion and shrinking, thinning and thickening. It is necessary to dwell upon the mentioned forms of the return, as it may seem unclear and strange at first glance how the return, salvation can happen in two opposite, controversial ways. But it only seems and in fact Narekatsi had its justification. The philosopher regarded the return (salvation) as "recreation", consequently the creation should be viewed as a re-return, re-salvation. The following judgments were conditioned by this kind of identification of the creation and return:

You, who are more enriched by giving than by receiving.

Your treasure increases more by sharing than by gathering.

Your estate grows more by disbursing than by collecting.

Your stores pile up more by distributing than by hoarding. (Pr. 31, A)

Usually wealth is gained by receiving, stores are piled up by hoarding, treasure increases more by saving and not by distributing, giving, sharing and spreading. But as everything counts in and for God, the things scattered, distributed, spread by God do not come out of his boundaries, they remain in him, and so, there is no need of collecting, gathering, returning treasure, saving creatures, drawing the alienated closer as they are collected when scattered, close when alienated, united when separated, etc. In this way, Narekatsi came to the transmutation and unity of diametrically opposite notions almost in any case. Thus, the return is also realized through thinning and thickening, expansion and shrinking, raising and lowering.

Of special importance are Narekatsi's views on primordial matter, his thoughts on the material diversity (everything) and the dialectics of homogeneity (primordial matter or nothing) transmutations.

Firstly, the salvation of Nature is its return to God when the whole material diversity becomes homogeneous, primordial matter which in its turn becomes a divine, a shadowless light. The change of diversity into homogeneity is amazingly depicted in Prayer 79:

*the earth will be shaken to its very foundations,
like billowing waves of the tempestuous sea,
that pursue each other, crash against each other...
shaking the foundations of the earth's thick surface
across its expanse
with forceful blows to its very core
and with thunderous sound,
laying the mountains low,
and melting the substance of stone with fire,
with all the other elements of nature.*

However, we already know that the return is not only salvation but also renewal, recompletion, recreation. During renewal Nature does not become something different from itself ("outside" of itself), it returns to itself and remains in itself. In this case the whole material diversity and

homogeneity (the so-called “primordial matter” which, by the way, acts as the ultimate matter in the above mentioned phase of salvation) are the two opposites of the Universe which though opposite to each other, form a unity transmuting into each other. By becoming smooth, melting, taking fire, the material diversity becomes homogeneous, but the evolution, the progress and existence of the Universe is not over by that, the opposite process; transition from homogeneity to diversity takes place simultaneously:

the heaven will be cleared in purity

and the creatures together with all their elements

will be recreated in a new form (Prayer 79, B).

Narekatsi stated that opposites had to be balanced in order to exist; when one of the opposites wins over the other it leads to degradation, destruction. Consequently, the transformation of diversity (primordial matter) into homogeneity and the development of homogeneity to diversity take place in balance.

There may be an objection that Gr. Narekatsi did not say it concretely but everyone knows only a fool needs to be told everything word for word. Didn't Narekatsi teach us that there is white amid black, good amid evil, truth amid lies, lowly amid the great (moreover, the lowly and the great are under one yoke)? If there is no homogeneous primordial matter in the whole material diversity (in "everything"), neither is there diversity and "everything". In the same way there ought to be elements and features of diversity in homogeneous primordial matter for the transmutation and unity of opposites of the diversity and homogeneity to be possible.

*Narekatsi's ability to think and
power of logic are on a universal scale;
in other circumstances he might be
the creator of the Theory of Relativity.*

Grigor Gurzadyan

B. Book of Knowledge

1. Epistemology

Narekatsi went deep into epistemological issues as far as they concerned the solution of the man's problem: in order to change the world and the man for the better, kinder and to perfect him first it is necessary to know them. Without trying to define epistemology (he considered it clear by itself), Narekatsi raised and uniquely solved the main problems related to knowledge – the question of knowing the world and the man (being in general), the question of the interrelation of the absolute and relative knowledge, the "faith and knowledge" interrelation, the revelation of human cognition process, etc. The elucidation and solutions of all these questions are a consistent system, namely Narekatsi's theory of knowledge, which is closely connected with his system of ontological views; the theory was deeply influenced by Neo-Platonism, too.

In the medieval Armenian mentality dominant was the idea that consciousness was the property of the soul and knowledge was the result of the soul's functional activity. The proponents of this view claimed that the soul – the bearer of knowledge, was devoid of that significant property outside and separate from the body. However, it was not a sound reason for concluding that if knowledge was not the result of only body, namely the functional activity of the head, it was at least the manifestation of the unity of the soul and the body. Narekatsi had both of the diametrically opposite views: on the one hand, he claimed that the soul was mixed and united with the body due to its property of acquiring knowledge: *an incorruptible mixture...as gold with fire, or to put it more plainly, light in air, neither transformed nor separated*. (Pr. 34, E). On the other hand, he thought that acquisition of knowledge was the head's function:

On the lamp stand of your body, encircling your head,

a chandelier with many arms was placed,

so that by its light you might not stray and might

see God and know what is everlasting. (Pr. 46, B)

And in Prayer 60 he called human head a "chandelier, peak of wisdom".

Narekatsi distinguished the "soul" and "knowledge" as separate concepts:

How can I be named a thinking being,

when I indulge in brutish ways?

How can I be called a seeing being,

when I have snuffed out my inner light?

*How can I be known as cognizant,
when I have slammed the door on wisdom?
How can I aspire to incorruptible grace,
when with my own hand I have slain my soul?
Indeed I lack attributes of a moving or even a breathing being
let alone one capable of spiritual and thoughtful life. (Pr. 21, D)*

Narekatsi distinguished two kinds of souls, human and animal, or more precisely, rational soul endowed with intellect and a soul deprived of it. The proof of it is the following: *as the soul is for the living beings and thought for the rational beings* (Prayer 44, C). So, the man's soul, endowed with intellect, in general was viewed as an autonomous, a relatively "developed" form of metaphysical existence of the soul; closer to God's soul as regards its perfection. Thus dependence, as regards the scale of perfection, was attributed to beings of not only the material world but also of the spiritual sphere.

Thus, the bearers of soul endowed with intellect are God and man. Narekatsi first drew deep lines between the human and divine intellectual abilities, as accepted in the Middle Ages, then this difference was sublated by their sameness.

Considering the problem of epistemology, Narekatsi put and uniquely solved the questions of epistemology – its determination and non-determination by reality, its selfhood, limitedness and limitlessness (finiteness and infinity), directness and indirectness (knowledge of all immediately, at once and in sequence and succession; through objects and phenomena), structure and non-structure (hierarchy and non-hierarchy, diversity and homogeneity), time, change, indelibility and other problems. And in the very solution of those questions the differences and similarities of the divine and human knowledge was revealed.

It is worthy of note that in the history of the Armenian philosophy David Anhaght was the first to come to the idea of the sameness of the divine and human knowledge and absolute and relative truths. Man can know everything relatively, a perfect man, perfect philosopher, is like God: "The thing that the perfect philosopher is like God is obvious from the fact that everything,

that is typical of God, is typical of man too because goodness, wisdom and might are typical of both him and God”⁸⁰.

Thus according to Anhaght, the human perfect knowledge is identical with or similar to the divine one “to the extent of human possibilities” as “... it is necessary to know that God’s goodness, wisdom and ability are different from those of a philosopher”⁸¹.

For Narekatsi perfect people’s, saints’ *truth is uniform and unshakable, their vision is bright and unconfused, their wisdom is heavenly and invincible, they are godly as much as humans can be* (Pr. 71, A), i.e. to the utmost extent of human abilities.

But for the first time in the history of philosophy David Anhaght viewed the interrelation of the divine (the most perfect, limitless) knowledge and human (imperfect, limited) knowledge from the standpoint of the deeply didactical logic of the sublation of sameness and difference, deepening the interconnection and mutual determination of those concepts, thereby developing and enriching their content. Thus, Narekatsi wanted perfection (and considered it possible and real) not only to the utmost extent of human possibilities but also to the extent of God’s omnipotence. Accordingly, man is all-knowing, all-seeing like God absolutely and divinely. But this phase was sublated with a new phase of difference, and it became clear that the absoluteness of man’s knowledge was relative, limited (or potential) while God’s knowledge was absolute, limitless (or actual).

The sameness and difference, interdependence of reality and knowledge. Narekatsi thought that the divine knowledge was identical with the reality and the human one was different: God’s Word (Logos) is the divine existence while the material reality is a state of that existence. The reality, though incarnate, is God’s Word. Neo-Platonic traditions are manifested here: *you constitute all things with your Word*. To know the reality at God’s level means to create it because word and work, wish and ability are identical for him:

I do not draw a line between your will

and your compassion, a line of doubt,

for I believe that you will, because

you are compassionate and you are able,

⁸⁰ David Anhaght, Erker (Writings), Yerevan, “Sovetakan Grogh”, 1980, p. 57.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 58.

because you are our creator.

Say the word and I will be cured (Pr. 17, C).

And man's word and work, reality and knowledge, wish and ability are different, they do not coincide. Man is an *unripe mind*, he is not able to *constitute all things*, he learns and never gains true knowledge: *I speak and do not act. I promise but do not perform* (Pr. 71, B). *There is always trial and error, often grave error* not only in man's works but also in his knowledge, while *God's wisdom leads, promises are kept, wishes are fulfilled* (Pr. 43, B).

This difference is sublated by the sameness of God's and man's intellectual abilities as, according to the author, God and man are not only different but also identical. In this phase the divine knowledge is not only identical with the reality but also different from it and the human knowledge is not only different but also identical. God's knowledge and man's knowledge are identical as both of them are identical and different in relation to reality. Though reality is identical with God's Word, it is also different from him. The reality is another existence of God's Word: reality is God's Word but in an incarnate form. Human knowledge is identical with reality in that it coincides with and corresponds to it.

In the next phase of differentiation, divine knowledge is absolutely identical with and different from reality and the human knowledge is relatively identical with and different from reality. Thus again a heavy line is drawn between man's and god's intellectual abilities though both of them are identical with and different from the reality, one is absolutely, the other relatively, one is actually, the other is potentially, to the extents of their possibilities; these "extents" are just different. God's Word (Logos) is absolutely identical with the material reality: this means that there is no duration of time between God's Word and the reality. According to Narekatsi, God's Word is realized absolutely, directly while there is a time between man's word, thought and work.

The same is with differentiation. God's Word is different from the reality as regards time; it precedes or succeeds the reality absolutely, in other words, God's Word is the absolute beginning and end of the reality; man's word succeeds the reality too, it can even precede it (foreseeing, creative reflection of the reality) but to the extent of his possibilities, that is relatively.

God's Word is absolutely incorporeal and consequently is absolutely different from the whole physical world, but to Narekatsi different things were also identical; absolutely different things were also absolutely identical.

So, the whole material diversity is God's Word, though incarnate but God's Word anyway. And at man's level the sameness and difference, the transmutation of thought and reality, of the subjective and objective beginnings are relative and limited...

In the next, identification phase God's knowledge and man's knowledge are both absolutely and relatively identical and different in relation to the reality. If in the previous phase the difference consisted in the extent of the God's and man's intellective abilities then in this phase this difference is sublated. God's knowledge is identical with and different from reality not only to his divine, absolute extent but also to the extent of human possibilities, viz. relatively; the same is with the human knowledge.

Striking and amazing is Narekatsi's dialectics of the objective and subjective sameness and difference. Though this dialectics was based on idealism (Narekatsi's idealism consisted in the fact that in the phase of differentiation the subjective origin was considered primary and superior), however it was a special, unique historical experience.

Narekatsi ran even to exaggerations in the matters of identifying word and work, knowledge and reality and yielded to mysticism. That principle brought him to the illusion that the spiritual-mental experience, self-cleansing in mind, ennobling in imagination were real. He fetishized word: according to him even one word could be decisive and become a way out for salvation: *Indeed, blessed is the phrase "I have sinned" that gives the heart a hope ...a bridge of life, pleasing to Heaven, ...a shield against hardship... victorious creative force, mighty abyss, terrifying separation, transcending art...* (Pr. 27, C). However this is a tribute to poetical maximalism and is soon sublated: *some of these are truly splendid... the word and its perfection* (Pr. 38, B) or *Why then should "my righteousness endure forever," when I have done nothing to attain it?* (Pr. 61, A). So Narekatsi did not concentrate on one of the phases of the differentiation and identification and never accepted it as a final truth; the continuity of the process of the sublation was the most important to him.

The relationship of God's and man's cognition in respect of the reality was not settled by this; making use of the same logic the author raised the problem of knowledge conditioned and not conditioned by reality:

Differentiation:

The divine knowledge conditions reality,

The human knowledge is conditioned by reality.

Identification:

The divine knowledge conditions and is conditioned by reality.

So is the human knowledge.

Differentiation:

The divine knowledge conditions and is conditioned by reality absolutely.

The human knowledge conditions and is conditioned by reality relatively.

Identification:

The divine knowledge conditions and is conditioned by reality absolutely and relatively.

So is the human knowledge.

The divine knowledge is self-caused and self-existent. God's knowledge exists itself and is not conditioned by anything; it precedes reality: *You who know everything before they happen*. Man's knowledge is conditioned by reality because the hierarchic construction of reality determines the similar structure of man's knowledge (Pr. 6; C, D).

This is the main difference of God's and man's intellectual abilities; however this difference is sublated by sameness. It turns out that God's knowledge is not only independent from reality and precedes it and the world of objects but is also conditioned by it. This idea deviated from the Christian Orthodoxy and Narekatsi transmitted it cautiously, indirectly: through incarnation God (God's Word) suffered all the earthly tortures thus learning, "measuring", feeling the suffering of our nature; only after it did he show his mercy. In this way, Narekatsi showed that God's Word's was conditioned by reality; or else why would the all-knowing God need to incarnate in order to know about man's miserable existence in this sinful world through personal suffering? However, this was interpreted differently in the Middle Ages: God endured earthly tortures and overcame them to restore people's faith, to show them God's omnipotence, but Narekatsi claimed the contrary: God did it to make sure, to know people's miserable and helpless existence and become merciful.

In epistemology Narekatsi's idea of the conditionality and non-conditionality of God's knowledge by reality (the reality conditioned by knowledge) or in other words the interconditionality of knowledge and reality came from the justification of the idea of the interconditionality of God (the Son of God, God's Word) and reality in ontology. The Holy

Mother of God, symbolizing the whole material world, was proclaimed as a *handmaid and Mother of God* (Pr. 80, B), and the Son (God's Word, one of the persons of the Trinity which is identical with the whole Godhead) as *your Son by birth, and your Lord by creation, a breathing Eden* for Mary.

Human knowledge, too, is not only conditioned by the reality but also determines it. The attribution of such kind of power to human knowledge was also unprecedented in the Middle Ages. To my mind, Narekatsi's *Book of Lamentations* is an ode to human reason. Due to his reason, the man changes the reality, and as such is proclaimed as a Creator, God.

The author paid special attention to the foreseeing mind. In general foreseeing was viewed as the main feature of God's knowledge as it preceded reality:

I did not exist, you created me.

Before I could wish, you shaped me.

Before I glimpsed the world's light, you saw me...

Knowing in advance my current trials,

you did not thrust me from your

sight. No, even foreseeing my misdeeds,

you fashioned me (Pr. 18, A).

However, in this phase this feature was attributed to human knowledge too; with the feature of creative reflection of reality, human knowledge is identical with the divine knowledge. Narekatsi emphasized that man was able to identify phenomena, not existent in the reality yet but emerging in the course of time:

And why have I discoursed about

such miniscule and abject things worthy of ridicule?

Only because they are the most powerful and irrefutable advocates of the Divinity,

reminding me of what awaits me in the next life, the bitter fruits

of my unruly body.

And even so deadly diseases happen upon us and

eat away relentlessly.

From these there is no riddance

other than through physical pains which foretell

the punishment that is to come. (Pr. 69, C)

Thus human knowledge is not only conditioned by the reality but also conditions it as this knowledge also precedes reality; by foreseeing, knowing the future in advance, man gets ready for it to some extent and tries to overcome future threats, to be adjusted to the reality or to change it.

This phase of identification is, however, sublated by the next differentiation of God's and man's knowledge. God's knowledge is absolutely conditioned and not conditioned by the reality to the "extent" of God's possibilities. Human knowledge is conditioned by the reality relatively, to the "extent" of human possibilities. This means that nothing happens in the world of objects without the knowledge of God, without God's Word and "hint", and God knows absolutely everything in advance, before everything happens. The world of objects is absolutely conditioned by the world of ideas and vice versa, i.e. God's Word, knowledge is absolutely conditioned by the whole reality; these are the two absolutely opposite sides of God's knowledge and existence. Thus Narekatsi's dialectics leads to very audacious ideas: God knows absolutely everything and simultaneously does not know, that reality is and is not absolutely conditioned by God's Word, his knowledge is absolutely independent from reality and simultaneously is absolutely conditioned by it... All this should be viewed as a development of the ideas of the so-called negative theology; particularly of the thesis: "God is everything and at the same time nothing".

As to the man's knowledge, the principle of the interdependence of reality and man's knowledge is concretized a little in this phase. It becomes clear that the man's knowledge is relatively conditioned by the world of objects, accordingly it conditions reality relatively. For instance, in case of such an intellectual phenomenon as foreseeing, the difference of God's and man's abilities is manifested vividly. God foresees absolutely, i.e. his ideas precede reality absolutely, while man does it relatively. God's foreseeing is not a result of some intellectual process like that of the man: man can foresee a non-existing phenomenon only through the knowledge of some regularity in certain parts and spheres of reality:

And so that the punishment awaiting me in the next life

does not come as a shock,

extraordinary event, or unprecedented calamity,

he has planted as a reminder here in my body
the token of the very first curse,
so that through this small insignificant speck the larger
illness might be examined. (Pr. 69, A)

Man cannot foresee absolutely everything at a time.

The difference and sameness of God's and man's intellective abilities are manifested not only in the conditionality and non-conditionality of knowledge by reality but also in their limitedness and limitlessness (finiteness and infinity), indelibility and removability, structure (hierarchic and homogeneous), etc.

It should be noted that while considering the question of the "divine" knowledge, Narekatsi touched upon almost the same categories as in the case of uncovering the "divine" existence and defining God. The divine existence and knowledge were, first of all, identical for him, in contrast to the man's existence and knowledge, consequently he considered God's Word, knowledge to be of the same nature as the divine existence. Qualities, attributed to existence were attributed to knowledge, too. Only the attribute of "space" can give rise to doubt; Narekatsi attributed it to God's existence though it should not be forgotten that the attribute was assigned to the incarnate God or to God's incarnate (materialized) state of existence. Thus, whatever is the limit of its attribution to God, his existence, the same is the limit of its attribution to God's knowledge, Word which is identified with reality, i.e. in case of the identical incarnate knowledge, incarnate Word.

Time. God's knowledge is eternal, and man's knowledge is temporary. Naturally, preference is given to the divine knowledge, which is not subject to the limitedness of time, is free from the timescale of past-present-future and is unchangeable in relation to time while the man's knowledge changes in the course of time. From the aspect of time, God's and man's intellective abilities are not only different but also identical and come from the general logic of Narekatsi's judgments. So God's knowledge is not only eternal, but also temporary and man's knowledge is not only temporary, but also eternal. For this purpose, Narekatsi created the concept "անծառնական" (untimely) which has two meanings, implying both finite and infinite time.

In the next phase of differentiation, an absolutely finite and infinite time is attributed to God's knowledge and a relative one to the man's knowledge. In this phase preference is given to human knowledge as it is eternal even if relatively and it is relatively temporary too, while God's

knowledge is absolutely eternal (absolutely infinite time) and absolutely temporary. Then this difference is sublated by sameness, etc.

Finiteness and infinity, limitedness and limitlessness. God's knowledge is limitless, infinite, man's knowledge is the contrary. God is all-knowing, all-seeing who *creates everything*:

What is beyond my reach, has been put there by you.

What is hidden from me in my fallen state,

is within view for your beatitude.

What is incalculable for me, has already been tallied by you, who are beyond telling.

What holds me in check, you handily turn back. (Pr. 57, A)

God is *all-seeing* while man is not able to cover the whole infinity by cognition, he is *unripe*.

We have learned from the ontology that God's creation is finite and infinite. Proceeding from the sameness of word and work, Word and reality, we should admit that not only God's existence is finite and infinite, limited and limitless but also God's word and knowledge are.

Narekatsi wrote that even a hint, a short, finite word of God was enough to create or to save:

Now with your sharp and mighty word

and the unbounded discretion of your swift judgment,

give me a way to redeem myself, as the Prophet

promised, even in my advanced stage of lawlessness. (Pr. 15, D)

At the same time, he emphasized that God's word and knowledge were endless, infinite, limitless. God has infinite wisdom; *You seek my return to you, and do not grow weary.* (Pr. 58, B)

Man's word and knowledge are finite and infinite. The finiteness of man's knowledge is beyond doubt and as to the infinity and limitlessness; the great thinker wrote that the human was able to know the surrounding world infinitely too. In Prayer 80 Narekatsi said that human was able to know the hierarchic reality too, that man's knowledge corresponded, reflected the infinity of the reality like God's knowledge.

But (here Narekatsi passed from the sameness of God's and man's knowledge to their difference, this time of a higher level) God knows the whole reality absolutely while man does relatively,

i.e. the whole finiteness and infinity of the reality are recognized by God actually and by man potentially. God already knows everything, while the man tries to know it *though not fully and wholly*. It follows from this that God's knowledge is absolutely finite and infinite, and man's knowledge is relatively finite and infinite. Again, there arises a large gap between man and God: each of them knows the reality to the extent of his possibilities.

This phase of differentiation is, certainly, sublated, and Narekatsi again comes to the sameness of God's and man's intellectual abilities. God's knowledge is not only absolutely finite and infinite, limited and limitless but is also relative. This last quality is attributed to the incarnate God, to that moment of God's existence, and human knowledge is not only relatively finite and infinite but is also absolute. And this quality is attributed to the divine man, to that moment of man's existence. Only this enabled Narekatsi to attribute qualities typical of the divine Word to his *Book of Lamentations* (the outcome of his, human knowledge): these features being comprehensiveness, almightiness, etc. And the author's words *I in all, and all in me* (Pr. 72, C) are not only of ontological but also of epistemological value. As word and work, knowledge and reality are identical, this expression refers not only to the man's existence but also to his knowledge: this thesis indicates that man not only owns, has all, everything in him, thus becoming identical with God, but also knows all, is all-knowing (gains knowledge of all through faith, *the miraculous knowledge of your Godliness* (Pr. 34, B), faith due to which one *sees the future and the hidden with the eye of the soul*. (Pr. 10, D)

The hierarcic nature of knowledge. The divine knowledge is homogeneous and multilayered (has many meanings), consequently there is no dependence in God's knowledge (types are not conditioned by one another) and vice versa. Speaking of man's knowledge Narekatsi emphasized its hierarcic nature. In Prayer 6 he specified that man learnt the hierarchy of reality through the hierarchy of his knowledge; man is able to know only some part of the infinite hierarchy of the reality: *the main categories are further divided into smaller classes, each of which has thousands upon thousands of subclasses*. Thus human knowledge is hierarchic too and corresponds to and reflects a part of the endless hierarchy of the reality. *The total number can be comprehended only by the one who sees as done that which is scripted in us*. And this is the only hierarchy of God's knowledge which reflects the whole hierarchy of the reality.

*If a person does not indulge in self-deception nor put on a mask,
and is not tricked by lack of faith,
but has self-knowledge,*

and senses our common human nature,

and is cognizant of being earth born and knows our proper place and limitations,

then he shall understand this list of attributes,

not as some meaningless scribble,

nor as a complete description of even the essential types and kinds of imperfections whirling in our nature.

Rather, he will know that I have identified certain seeds of the thousands of evils,

and even if through these he learns of others,

he will realize that even these categories are not enough. (C)

It is obvious from this part that Narekatsi drew a line between the limits of God's and man's intellectual abilities: the hierarchy of God's knowledge is absolute (infinite) and the hierarchy of man's knowledge is relative (finite).

This part has another implication. Of course, Narekatsi not only differentiated God's and man's knowledge but also identified them when both of them were attributed with the quality of absolute and relative hierarchy, but then he again differentiated them and once more identified them and so on. As in the phases of differentiation, there arose the problem of choice, Narekatsi emphasized that in all the phases of differentiation the limitedness and finiteness of human knowledge was revealed in relation to God's knowledge, i.e he gave priority and preference to God's knowledge. The D part of the mentioned Prayer 6 is about it: however enriched, developed and identified with the divine knowledge may the human knowledge be, all the same it remains within its limits, incomplete and limited. But this is not a final decision either.

Narekatsi was never one-sided. He solved all problems within two systems of assessment, if one may use such a term, from two angles, two standpoints, from aspect of God (absolute, eternal, infinite) and that of the man (relative, mortal, finite). We may conclude from the standpoint of the first "system of assessment" that in all the phases of differentiation preference is given to the divine knowledge. However, there is also another conclusion drawn from the second, the man's "system of assessment": the divine absolute knowledge is simultaneously an absolute non-knowledge and the human relative knowledge is simultaneously a relative non-knowledge (in accordance with the same logic of regarding human relative existence as more acceptable than the divine existence (absolute), which is at the same time an absolute non-existence).

And here (in the phase of differentiation) Narekatsi gave preference to the human knowledge choosing the lesser evil.

Thus if in one case (in the first “system of assessment”) it is preferable for God not to know anything in order to know everything (to know and not to know absolutely), in the other case (for the man) it is preferable to know little in order not to know little (to know and not to know relatively).

Faith and Knowledge

Human knowledge is relative, its cognitive means are imperfect. However, Narekatsi put the question of the necessity of seeing God and the study of the impassibility: *knowing you is a perfect justice*. From the very beginning, he touched upon the possibility and impossibility of knowing God. In this concern, he went deep into the interrelation of faith and knowledge. After long meditation he came to the conclusion that

Both unruly sin and deep regret

plunge us into damnation, being

essentially similar even though from different sources.

But when compared they share the same character flaws:

one doubts the strength of the Almighty's

hand like a cowardly skeptic,

while the other, like a wild beast,

brutally cuts the thread of hope. (Pr. 10, A)

And the only way out of desperation is faith. By making great efforts, Narekatsi began to build an edifice of faith (of course, with a new architecture):

I catch my breath like one bludgeoned with a thick club,

until he reaches death's shores. I catch

my breath, mustering whatever life remains...

I begin this book of Prayers with supplications.

I shall build an edifice of faith. (B)

As with faith, everything is possible.

Narekatsi's faith was not blind; it was based on knowledge: *Faith brings the rewards of truly clear vision, perfect wisdom.* According to him, faith was a source of knowledge: *Faith means setting aside doubt to see the future and the hidden with the eye of the soul* (i.e. intuition-S. P.). Narekatsi said: *we should accept it as the first step toward eternal life.* (Pr. 10)

Why did he believe in God? *For you are capable of all things and are the key to all things with your boundless greatness and infinite wisdom* (Pr. 40, A). Narekatsi's edifice of faith was built on a viewpoint of intellectual value: everything is possible and real in infinity. It was impossible either to deny or to confirm this view that was why he put that thesis on the basis of his united edifice of faith and knowledge. It was not an ordinary faith; it was a faith in infinity. The object of Narekatsi's worship was the infinity, eternity. He was well aware of the finiteness', man's weakness in relation to infinity; weakness to overcome infinity (both practically and through knowledge), to overcome finally, that was why he said: *And what hope of revival seems more remote* than the faith in God's infinity and almightiness.

God is an object of faith because his existence and the thing that he is capable of all things with his boundless greatness and infinite wisdom is beyond understanding: *adored for your greatness beyond understanding* (Pr. 87, B); but this *understanding* does not mean that God cannot be known at all, it merely means that he just cannot be known completely; isn't God known through revelation? Thus faith and knowledge are interconnected, united; knowledge is based on faith and vice versa (to know through faith and to believe by knowing).

The ultimate object of man's cognition is God, the impassibility. How does a man recognize in general and how does a man recognize God in particular? Narekatsi thought that though God was infinite, as an impersonal beginning, and finite as a personal beginning, though he was both incorporeal and corporal, all the same it was not only possible to know him but also necessary: *for to know you is a perfect justice and to know your strength is the root of immortality* (Pr. 48, A). According to him, the man had been endowed with consciousness to seek to see God and study the impassibility.

Grigor Narekatsi's logic is the basis of my book

"The Armon Structure of Metauniverse".

S. Poghosyan

2. Logic

The main aspect of the everlasting value of Grigor Narekatsi's literary-philosophical heritage is its unfading freshness in all times, the uniqueness full of unexpected, sudden transitions, which are an expression of dialectical logic. Though Narekatsi did not write a separate work on logic, he left us the "Logic" of his *Book of Lamentations (Book of Life)*, the materialized logic realized in the system of his book.

The aim of this chapter is to show, to reveal Narekatsi's logic in its "pure" form, conditionally throwing off the "material".

Getting comprehensive, serious education in one of the medieval Armenian educational-scientific centers, in the school of Narek monastery, Narekatsi was possibly well aware of the achievements of such a field of scientific thought as logic, which was an obligatory discipline in such schools. In the medieval conditions, when Aristotle's logic suffocated in the jail of scholastics, Narekatsi's rebellious and unruly mind put forward his "Logic", having the following thesis as a basis: it is not necessary to adjust thinking to some system of limited laws and principles which is an outcome of thinking but, on the contrary, it is necessary to adjust such a system to thinking which is always in function and development, i.e. the system should be movable, self-sublating, it should not hinder but demand, stimulate the movement and development of thought. That is to say, the resistance of Narekatsi's soul and the aspiration to be free of the limitations typical of that period were manifested in this case too. Narekatsi was an advocate for the free, living human mind which did not endure *limitations by law, legalism*; a mind awoken from the *death sleep* of the medieval *dark night* and being bored, confronted (to the extent of antagonism) the numbness of thought.

Yet amidst green pastures blooming

with life-giving counsel, intelligent beings

irrationally and willfully choose

to graze in poisonous fields of delusion (Pr. 60, B).

Narekatsi marked the beginning of the next, new spiral of the historical development of knowledge, thought, and every beginning, embryonic stage has a comparatively larger, more comprehensive and richer content. Thus, the study of Narekatsi's main work, the *Book of Lamentations*, enables the revelation of the embryos of the dialectical principles and ways of the development of thought contained in the book.

* * *

Narekatsi's philosophy, whole system of his views, is the solution of the "Man-God" antinomy-problem, on the logic (structure) of which we shall dwell in detail.

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The System and Logic of "Narek" (the Book of Lamentations)

Though Narekatsi said: *my mind whirls with anxiety unable to concentrate* (Pr. 23, B), it does not mean that there was no systematization in his views. Of course, there was. Only at first glance, outwardly, may it seem that his views on the man and the world were fragmented, disconnected, and if we approach them in essence, we will discover an inner, essential, deep connection and interdependence of Narekatsi's views, viewpoints, judgments and concepts and a harmonious and symmetric system of views based on the principle of the unity of opposites. Narekatsi's every view, judgment or concept can be fully comprehended only on the background of the whole system of his views, in that "assessment system".

What is that system? It is a close and at the same time open, complete and incomplete work. The *Narek* is a unity of a limited number of lines which, however, has unlimited possibilities as to its content.

Grigor Narekatsi touched upon eternal topics, the interrelations of the eternal and temporary, finite and infinite and he clearly realized that it was impossible to study, describe these problems completely and once and for all. For instance, speaking of the human infinite evils *whirling in our nature*, Narekatsi said that that he could not identify those endless evil deeds completely: *I have identified certain seeds of the thousands of evils, and even if through these he learns of others, he will realize that even these categories are not enough.* (Prayer 6) It is impossible to identify God fully either: *you who are not limited by law prevail over it.*

Narekatsi defined: *The main categories of afflictions are further divided into smaller classes, each of which has thousands upon thousands of subclasses. But the total number can be comprehended only by the one who sees as done that which is scripted in us.*

In this way, he gave *a part* of the infinite hierarchy of the world, which symbolized the whole hierarchy, *a part* of the infinite hierarchy of knowledge, which symbolized the whole knowledge. The *part* of the infinity not only symbolized the infinity (besides being a part of the infinity) but was also a means for studying it. That *part* seemed to be an algorithm for knowledge.

Narekatsi's *Book of Lamentations* itself (his system of views) is *a part* of the infinity; his book is a limited system with unlimited possibilities (that is why it enables the reader to complete the incomplete ideas with his or her own thoughts). The system of Narekatsi's views is not only a part of the infinite hierarchy of knowledge but also an algorithm for opening and developing that hierarchy, i.e. it is a part of the infinite hierarchy of logic. It is one of those rare cases when a thinker has achieved the sameness of system and method, when ontology, epistemology and

logic coincide, are relatively identified, interwoven, and that is manifested in the main concepts of the interrelations of God and man.

There were two opposite methodological principles in Narekatsi's thoughts. On the one hand, he tried to avoid one-sidedness, confirming one he also confirmed the other, rejecting one he rejected the other. For instance, he wrote that God was exalted and humble or that man was not only evil but was also good:

*And now, if the Slanderer takes credit
as part of his day's work,
for planting his bad seeds
and using his evil devices on us, the wayward,
why should you not count one by one the good things
that by your will and saving care
are planted in us to fortify our souls (Pr. 29, E).*

If one may use such a term, Narekatsi was guided by the principle of "completeness of contradiction" in the development of all his judgments. In Prayer 38 he wrote:

*Now, as I wrote in the beginning of this work,
about the dark origins of the cardinal sins and
the workings of the bodily organs,
by which I am dominated, human heir of death,
here, in this Prayer, I recount, even if it is
a drop taken from the limitless expanse of the sea,
a few aspects of the spiritual life
that liberate those born in the light
through our Lord Jesus. (A)*

Then enumerating God's positive gifts— *freedom and its benefits, art and its miracles, the word and its perfection, the bough and its bounty, hope and its salvation*, etc.—he wrote: *I apologize*

for my always miserable, wretched soul, because my composition mixes the voice of good news with mournful protests, bringing justice and judgment, decision and penalty (C).

On the other hand, Narekatsi knew that in order not to grow foolish in gaining the useful and in the choice of the good and kind, it was necessary to direct one's mind at one target and not at every one, i.e. it is necessary to follow the principle of non-contradiction (consistency), according to which the same thing could not be true and simultaneously false. Thus Narekatsi's logic relied on two opposite but mutually supplemental principles.

Now let us consider how the unity of one-sidedness and multi-sidedness (conditionally termed) of his mind was realized.

In his book he stated that God was exalted and man was, for instance, humble, God was light, and the man was darkness. And immediately proceeding from the principle of completeness of contradiction, he claimed that God was not only exalted but also humble. Of course, he grounded that idea: *խոնարհիլեցիր Վիշն քարճրյալ*: There is no comma here and it can be understood in two ways: the always exalted humbled himself and the exalted always humbled himself.

Thus proceeding from the principle of non-contradiction, the following separate judgments can be made: the exalted humbled himself and the humbled rose and finally, again proceeding from the principle of the completeness of contradiction, he came to the conclusion that these processes took place simultaneously: *From the heaven to earth, from the earth to heaven, descent to earth and ascent into heaven on high (Ode to Church)*, humbling the exalted and raising the fallen. Narekatsi did not take one absolute direction in the process of thinking (or the same as taking many absolute directions) but did it relatively, he simultaneously thought in two directions not absolutely but relatively: first he examined the main, the common, the big and the whole then moved on to the secondary, the private, the small, the part, each of which had its parts, i.e. he passed from the big to small, from the small to smaller, from the whole to part and so on and so forth. Then he took the opposite direction, passed from the part to whole, from the small to big, from the big to bigger, etc.: *through this small insignificant speck the larger illness might be examined* (Pr. 69, A).

It turns out that in the process of thinking Narekatsi took both one-sided and multisided directions. His direction was one-sided because he first passed from the big to small, then from the small to big but this one-sidedness was relative too as, all in all, Narekatsi took two directions: 1) from the big to small, 2) from the small to big, i.e. it was relatively one united progress, direction, process of thinking and relatively two separate directions, progresses, processes. This was a dialectical manifestation of knowledge. It was the very law of the

negation of the negation in the processes of gaining knowledge. In Narekati's poem this law was realized at the level of knowledge.

Other logical techniques

One of the forms, ways of Grigor Narekatsi's wording of speech was its complexity. At first glance, it seems that he chattered, talked too much, mixing together concepts, judgements but it was not done without purpose. Speaking of God, Narekatsi enumerated God's numerous qualities and relations, usually the ones which were accepted in the Christian ideology. Such parts are monotonous and the reader usually does not concentrate on each concept and judgement of the text; he just reads and passes them not going deep into their meaning. Foreseeing this Narekatsi, as if purposely, put controversial concepts and judgements, different from the common part in content, amid those lines. E.g. Speaking of God's positive qualities in the first part of Prayer 90 he suddenly stated that God was the end of trust. In the same way, speaking of man, he said so many negative things about him and suddenly all that had been said seemed to be denied when he made a judgement about the man and it turned out that man was not such a negative creature. Narekatsi made use of the technique of "compounding" and "colouring" concepts and judgements, definitions and descriptions mostly for logical purposes; it was a technique of developing the content of opposite, antinomic concepts which finally led to the transmutation, unity and identification of opposite concepts. E.g. while defining the "good and evil", describing their features and relationships (relations with other concepts), eloquent Narekatsi made use of the compounding of epithets thus achieving the ultimate (superlative) development, expansion, "exaggeration" of the content of one of the concepts, for instance the good, which suddenly led to the radical change of that concept; its transformation into its opposite.

Thus, going too deep into the concept of the "Good", you suddenly find out that the good is the same as the evil and vice versa.

He also had another technique opposite to this one. In this case judgements were incomplete, he would not come to final conclusions, e.g. *the origin of the Son by fatherhood, and not by priority* (Pr. 28, G). This judgement remained unsettled: if a father is the origin of the son, he ought to be prior to the son, and if he is not prior, he is not the origin of the son.

But Narekatsi would not reduce these judgements to small pieces, would not define everything concretely; he left it to the reader.

Or another example: *if you destroy us, judging us by our deeds, your glory will not be diminished, for you will be judged as just. But if you accept us, you will be exalted as befits your*

majesty (Pr. 48, H); (the literal translation of the last part is: *you will be twofold exalted* -A. T.). The logical transmutation of the structure of this judgment is very interesting:

- 1) If God rises twofold by accepting then he must diminish twofold by losing,
- 2) If by losing God loses nothing he will not be exalted twofold by accepting.

Firstly, God changes if he is to be exalted twofold by accepting the man, secondly if we keep close to the principle of God's non-changeability then God must neither be exalted twofold, nor change by accepting man.

Thus Narekatsi has united two opposite judgements in one antinomy-judgement which is an infinite judgement from the point of view of logic.

The Formation of Narekatsi's "Logic"

Special attention should be paid to the inner mechanism of the development of Narekatsi's views. When thinking of the revelation of that logic, the fact that Narekatsi's all thoughts underwent a common stage of development attracts the attention, first of all. The community of the regularities of the development (being) of all the ideas justifies the abstraction of the overall concept of "logic".

As it has already been said, the axis of Narekatsi's teaching was God-man interrelation with its three aspects: ontological, epistemological and social-ethnic. The deepening and expansion of God-man interrelation in these three aspects resulted in the development of Narekatsi's ontological, epistemological and social-ethnic concepts the very unity of which comprised the great thinker's teaching.

Though God-man interrelation has been developed uniquely in each of these three aspects and their contents are different, the generality and unity of their logic and inner structure are obvious, as well as it is obvious that the contents of these aspects have been expended on the basis of a common "logic" and all the main ideas have undergone the common phases of development in them...

Narekatsi's "logic" can be illustrated with the development of any idea (concept, judgment), however, my aim is to show Narekatsi's "logic" or logeme, as I call it, not only in a static, ready-made state but also in the process of its development, not only to show the logeme but also to reveal the use, expansion of that logeme step by step, its development into a logic of an entire teaching. That is why it is relevant (as well as from the point of view of the succession of the

writing) to start the analysis, the study with the main, basic and most frequently viewed question: the interrelation of “God” and “Man”.

Narekatsi expressed the historical development of the concepts of “God” and “Man” and their interrelation in the form of logical development of these concepts and their interrelation. Narekatsi not only condensed and expressed the whole previous development of the question (G-M) but taking into account the neo-platonic achievements of that question, also developed them pointing to the all possible directions of the further development of the question and, most importantly, giving the algorithm of its further development.

Before Narekatsi, the question of the interrelation of the concepts, ideas “God-Man” had undergone two main phases of development:

1) The phase of uniqueness or privacy ($G \rightarrow M$). This is a relationship of man’s dependence on God; like any of all beings, the man, too, depends on, proceeds from and is conditioned by God uniquely, privately. 2) The phase of speciality or special ($G \rightarrow M \rightarrow G$). The interrelation of God and man is viewed as a special interrelation. This idea has been considerably developed in different systems of neo-platonic philosophy; not only the $M \rightarrow G$ interrelation is special, as among all creatures only the man is able to become divine (to *return to God*) or to interact with and condition God but also the $G \rightarrow M$ interrelation is special. In this phase, the man’s dependence on God is not identical with the dependence of other earthly beings, nor is the man’s creation like the creation of other beings.

Narekatsi not only adopted the content of these two preceding phases as necessary steps of the development of thought but also elaborated them, passing from the phase of special to the general though he was not a representative of the phase of the general. The great thinker deduced from the $G \rightarrow M \rightarrow G$ interrelation and grounded the other possible variants of the $G \rightarrow M$ interrelation via logical deduction:

$G \rightarrow M \rightarrow G$

$G \rightarrow G \rightarrow G$

$M \rightarrow G \rightarrow M$

$M \rightarrow M \rightarrow M$

$G \rightarrow M \rightarrow M$

$G \rightarrow G \rightarrow M$

$M \rightarrow M \rightarrow G$

$M \rightarrow G \rightarrow G$

The relationships $G \rightarrow M \rightarrow G$ and $M \rightarrow G \rightarrow M$ can be united in the $G \rightarrow M \rightarrow G \rightarrow M \rightarrow G \rightarrow M$ relationship, which has two expressions in the phase of identification: $G \rightarrow G \rightarrow G \rightarrow G \rightarrow G$ and $M \rightarrow M \rightarrow M \rightarrow M \rightarrow M$.

Thus in this phase the interrelation of God and man was viewed as an interrelation including and expressing all the possible special interrelations ($G \leftrightarrow M$), i.e. by discovering all the main special types of God-man interrelation Narekatsi did not concentrate on stating the fact of their existence (possibility), but going on he discovered what was common to them. Then he passed from the common to the general. He revealed the generality of the special interrelations and the interrelations of God and any creature. ($G \leftrightarrow M$) Interrelation became general for all opposite concepts, interrelations, with the help of which the interrelation of already universal importance was characterized and defined.

It is necessary to show the concrete process of the logical development of $G \rightarrow M$ interrelation during which that unique interrelation develops into a generality expressing all the types of interrelations of the concepts "God and Man".

The main question of philosophy, in the form of God and man (=nature) interrelation, had been raised both before the Christian ideology and during its domination. Even the medieval disputes on Christ's nature must be viewed as a manifestation of the development of human thought on the main problem of philosophy. Narekatsi was well aware of debates (lasting several centuries) on Monophysitism and Dyophysitism (his ecclesiastical-doctrinal education in the monastery of Narek made it possible), besides, apparently, he knew about and might have taken part in the ongoing debates between the Armenian and Georgian Churches (Ukhtanes wrote his *History* at Narekatsi's request). So Narekatsi's approach to this question is very interesting especially as he did not view this question as a narrow religious-doctrinal superficial problem or just a ground for ecclesiastical-political sovereignty, originality; he concentrated his attention on the essential aspect of the problem, perceiving it as a problem of philosophy. That is why we do not see a one-sided support of the official point of view of the Armenian Church by him. Narekatsi viewed that narrow private doctrinal problem as a variant of the general theoretical problem of $G \rightarrow M$ interrelation:

God (=Christ) is God,

Man is man,

God (=Christ) is God and man,

So is the man,

God (=Christ) is God and man as God (divinely),

Man is God and man as a man (to the extent of human possibilities)

God (=Christ) is God and man as God and as a man (both man's and God's abilities are identical)

So is the man.

Of course, Narekatsi did not come to a stop on this, but I think for now this much is enough ... To all appearance, this was a complex process of mental suffering for the author and not a parade across a well-known path. Certainly, each transition from phase to phase should be regarded as a flight of thought.

God is only God, and man is only man: this initial difference of God and man is not an absolute, ultimate truth. Narekatsi found its Achilles' heel: if God is identical only to himself, and man is identical only to himself, it means that God is not identical with anything else different from him, nor is the man, and as such, God and man are identical with each other (if they are identical then God is man, man is God, consequently God is God and man, and the man is man and God). But this contradicts to the initial thesis as it was initially accepted that God and man were different, hence the initial opinion that "God is only God" was false, and the judgment "God is God and man while the man is man" corresponds to the principle of God's and man's difference. In this way, the principle of Dyophysitism was deduced (Narekatsi deduced this idea in another way, too: God is God, and man is man; but isn't God everything? Consequently, he is man too, so God is God and man).

But due to the existence of this principle there immediately arose a chance of a new deduction, and it became an imperative need to draw conclusions (there arose a new inner controversy, contradiction which was to be sublated). If God is man then man is God.

It turned out that not only the judgement "Man is man, and God is God and man" corresponded to the principle of difference but also the judgement "God is God, and man is God and man" did. Why does the first judgement correspond to the principle of difference? In that phase the difference (or difference at that level) demands one of the objects in differential relationship to

be different from the other, being identical with something else different from it when the other one is not: God is different from the man because God is identical with something different from him (there is nothing different from him, except the incarnate Son) and man is not. But the second judgement corresponds to this demand pretty well, too.

So, the principle of Dyophysitism (God is God and man) and its opposite (man is God and man) form a new phase, the phase of identification of God and man (so that the principle of pantheism comes to its true, ultimate form in this phase of thinking: not only God is Man (=Nature) but also Man (=Nature) is God).

The next transition which Narekatsi made in his mind was more complex because the previous transition from the difference of God and man to their sameness was a completed process in the frames of the same phase, the phase of the difference of God and man and the difference of their sameness (a difference of a second, higher level) while the next was the transition from one phase to another. More substantial development, progress of thought in the frames of the phase of the difference of God and man and the difference of their sameness was not possible as the thought had reached its perfection in that phase; the idea of the difference of God and man and the difference of their sameness was formed and came to its perfection through the transition from the difference of God and man to their sameness. The further expansion and development of thought brought to the sublation of that idea, to coming out of the frames of the difference of God and man and the difference of their sameness, and to the transition to the identification of the difference and sameness of God and man.

Before Narekatsi nobody had managed to “ground” the principle of Monophysitism through logical techniques, to show the logical process of the formation of the principles of both Monophysitism and Dyophysitism the way Narekatsi did it.

The General Nature and Structure of the "Logic"

Thus the judgment “G and M as G and M are G and M” was Narekatsi's “Logic”.

First of all, it should be noted that Narekatsi's logeme was both a judgment and a process of deductions (a process of logical thinking and the final outcome of that process).

Why has this judgment been accepted as the general and main logical law of Narekatsi's "Logic"? This judgment is common for the previous three judgments. None of the previous judgments can cover it while the latter has the previous ones as its constituent parts. It is the integral, the unity of the previous three judgments. In this case, there may arise the objection that further judgments of the same nature and direction will be more general than this judgment of mine, regarded as

logeme. Why this and not the succeeding judgments should be considered the main logical law, the "Logic"? The thing is that logeme is a relatively complete logical construction of the logical teaching structure, moreover it is the simplest structural unit, from its aspect the preceding judgments are incomplete while the succeeding ones are extended and overmature, i.e. the succeeding ones are logemes in relation to the initial one. In other words, the previous judgments are the phases of the formulation of the logeme and the succeeding ones are the phases of its expansion.

And finally, this judgment is regarded as a logeme conventionally, taking into consideration its more or less complete structure. It is a three-level hierarchic construction in which there is not only negation but also negation of the negation. For instance, the judgment "G and M are G and M" is considered relatively complete too but it is devoid of negation of the negation. That is to say, logeme is just a ring of the endless chain of negations, it presupposes not only negation but also negation of the negation or in other words, it is only a spire of the infinite process of the spiral development of thought and is relatively complete.

It is also general because it seems to include all the possible transitions of thought in an encoded form.

During the development of thought of his teaching Narekatsi reached a culmination point, logically coming to the conclusion that God and man were everything and at the same time nothing. It once more attested that Narekatsi's logeme was common for all antinomic concepts. Deducing that common judgment, Narekatsi started using its construction as an operator, means, law of thinking. That was why Narekatsi sought another, more perfect formulation, a more general counterpart of that judgment and, that was why he worked out the dialectics of the antinomic concepts "all, everything" and "nothing, non-being" (developing ancient thinkers' principle "all is all" and the neo-platonic principle "God is everything and nothing").

As Hegel would say, it is happiness for thought that Narekatsi tried to express his "Logic" in a more abstract form.

Being and non-being are and are not being and non-being.

Such kind of judgements (regarded by many people as nonsense or ciphering) in Narekatsi's lays should be viewed as manifestations of the author's mental efforts in this direction.

Then, of course, it becomes clear that conventionally every thought, idea, judgement can be regarded as a logeme.

C. The Concept of the Man

(Book of Salvation and Immortality)

The ultimate goal of Narekatsi's philosophical-ideological system was the problem of man. Making gigantic spiritual-mental efforts Narekatsi tried to study and reveal God's, the All's qualities and relationships, only to be able to reveal the man's qualities and relationships, the aim of human existence. The greatest aim of the thinker's life and philosophical activity was (I emphasize it with a deep feeling of responsibility) first to explain, reveal, to know the Man and the world, and then most importantly, to change the Man and the world for the better and more perfect. Of course, while raising and solving these problems Narekatsi proceeded from the standpoint of idealism, but the universal-historical importance of Narekatsi's literary heritage consists in the fact that due to his all-powerful dialectical method the genius thinker drew a lot of rational conclusions, moreover during raising and solving almost all the problems he partially and at times impudently and courageously came out of religious-idealistic limits.

Narekatsi's thoughts on the problems of Man developed into a consistent, autonomous system of views, a concept, where both the ontological and epistemological and social-ethnic aspects of the problem were touched upon.

1. The Man and His Categories (Qualities)

Firstly, it should be again noted that while defining God and man Narekatsi made use of two types of positive and negative qualities, diametrically opposite to each other. While revealing God's essence the starting points were positive categories from which negative ones were inferred and attributed to God, and in the case of man he acted the other way round.

What is Man?

If during the revelation of God's essence Narekatsi treated it very cautiously as he could not show the controversiality of God's essence directly, in the case of the man he was more courageous: from the very beginning, he spoke of the man's controversiality:

... contradictory impulses in my soul

brace for battle like clashing mobs.

Crowds of thoughts strike each other, sword

against armour, evil against good,

ensnaring me for death (Pr. 1, B).

In order to describe the man Gr. Narekatsi used two types of qualities, diametrically opposite to each other: a) wicked, dark (shadow, i.e. material), animate (irrational), brute (not wise), foolish, dead, deficient, small, temporary (mortal), unstable (changeable), etc.; b) good, light, wise, living privilege, great (infinite), eternal, stable (unchangeable), etc. Then the thinker came to the idea of their transmutation: if the man is wicked among the kind, dead among the living, brute among the wise, dark among the light then he is kind among the wicked, alive among the dead, wise among the brute, etc.

The struggle of opposites led to change and loss, that was why Narekatsi thought that the perfect, “just” state for the man was the moment of the sameness, unity, equality, balance of opposites:

You combined opposites in the make-up of man,

a little gravity, a little levity,

on the one hand coolness, on the other heat,

so that by keeping the opposites in balance,

we might be called just,

because of this faithful equality.

And however virtuous we might be judged

on this account, when transported upward,

we should bear in view that we have been made of humble clay

and accept the crown of tribulation.

But since we violated your commandment of the

Old Testament

and following our earthly nature, strayed like animals,

we were laid low and bound to the earth,

in some instances by disease, and others by cruelty,

some by gluttony and passions,

as if a ravenous beast was joined to our nature.

Sometimes one of four primary elements,

lunges forward and uncontrollably, savagely and

relentlessly raises its head.

And though warmed by the fervour of our love for you

and by token of your spark which is in us,

the coldness that is its constant companion,

extinguishes it, disrupting the good.

And although we ascend to you with the

airy ways of angels, the weight and density of

our first element, earth,

holds us down, and hinders us. (Pr. 86, A)

* * *

At first the great thinker accepted that Man was a small, finite, temporary, unstable being in relation to and in comparison with God:

Do not measure your greatness against my smallness,

your light against my dimness,

your good nature against my native evil,

your undiminishing fullness against my slavish poverty. (Pr. 17, B)

And reasonably, Narekatsi took it for granted but it would not content him as a man and a thinker; it was an initial statement and not a final conclusion for him. Narekatsi was a dialectical thinker that was why proceeding from the principle of the completeness of contradiction, he grounded the Man's being great, infinite, eternal, indestructible, his endowment with divine qualities, his being God (by the way, the existence of these very qualities gave Narekatsi a hope that man could become immortal).

Thus when revealing God's essence, Narekatsi started with his positive qualities, on the basis of which he differentiated, deduced the negative ones, only in the end achieving their dialectical unity; and in case of the man he began with the man's negative qualities (it is clear why), then differentiated the positive ones, achieving their dialectical unity in the end.

Now let us consider how the author grounded the man's positive qualities. Of course, Narekatsi made a great deal of mental efforts during it, displaying all his potentials of dialectical thinking.

Man is infinite, endless and everything (all).

He treated all the manifestations of human nature as sins: everything that is human and material is a sin. Enumerating a whole range of sins in Prayer 6, he wrote at the end:

*And these are but the main categories
of the soul's common afflictions.*

*They are further divided into smaller classes,
each of which has thousands upon
thousands of subclasses,
but the total number can be comprehended
only by the one who sees as done
that which is scripted in us. (E)*

He accepted his – the man's inability to identify and describe the infinity of human sins in Prayer 9 too.

Man is not only morally responsible for the crimes and sins of all generations but also being a result of all these crimes, has all sins in him:

*For you have indulged with unsparing excess
in the harvest of all the human evils
from Adam till the end of the species, and even found some new ones,
despised and repugnant to your creator, God. (Pr. 9, B)*

Or

No one is so sinful as I...

I alone, and no one else,

I in all, and all in me. (Pr. 72, C)

There is another, an indirect justification for the thing that man is everything, consequently also infinite: as God is everywhere and in everything so he is in man too and as God is everything, consequently so is the man...

Man is eternal, unchanging, indestructible, etc. or the problem of being and not being, rest and movement, life and death.

For Narekatsi life, existence was connected with movement and change while death was connected with rest: *immovable and breathless death* (Pr. 18, G); *that happy man, Job, called mortal death a rest* (Pr. 55, E). But Narekatsi was a serious dialectician, he would not concentrate on it; he came to the idea of the transmutation of life and death, movement and rest. He disagreed with Job:

And with that holy man I too would agree,

had I not the heavy burden of mortal deeds. (Pr. 55, E)

Is it necessary to realize that death is a rest for an honest man but is not a rest for the one bearing the burden of mortal deeds? If it is, then we have come across Narekatsi's next trick: why not call the man sinful if it saves him from rest, i.e. death, and he demanded calm and peaceful life. *Man is not totally dead to the world but is not truly alive to God* (Pr. 26, A); *The various elements of the nature of my essence are like enemies at war with each other, wavering with the timidity of opinions in total crisis. Although kin, they are destroying each other in irreconcilable betrayal, neither dead nor alive, buried in the mire of the baseness of sin* (that was why he wanted rest, balance, sameness, rest, unity of opposites) (Pr. 26, C); *I lie here on a cot struck down by evil, sinking in disease and torment, like the living dead* (Pr. 18, G).

Thus, Narekatsi thought that though alive, he was a living dead man and later speaking of death, he demanded *immortal death*. Through such a dialectical transmutation of concepts, Narekatsi discovered the objective dialectics of life and death:

Establish your blessed word in me indelibly

For although I speak among the living,

I am dead to you, who are beyond reach,

*yet on the day I succumb to death's destruction,
may I be saved through my faith in your
all-powerful orders. (Pr. 66, D).*

* * *

Narekatsi revealed the man's ontological nature with the help of "soul" and "body", the incorporeal and corporeal qualities (the most basic among ontological qualities).

Narekatsi revealed man's all qualities comparing them with God's qualities in the chain of sublations of God's and man's difference and sameness. From the beginning, in the first phase of differentiation God was regarded as incorporeal and the man as corporeal:

I. Differentiation

G is incorporeal

M is corporeal

Identification

G is incorporeal and corporeal

M is incorporeal and corporeal

II. Differentiation

G is incorporeal and corporeal to the extent of God's possibilities, absolutely

M is incorporeal and corporeal to the extent of human possibilities, relatively

Identification

G is incorporeal and corporeal absolutely and relatively

M is incorporeal and corporeal absolutely and relatively and so on and so forth.

In the first phase of differentiation, the contradiction of the incorporeal and corporeal is outside the man (and God) because individually both of them are united and non-controversial inwardly: either corporeal or incorporeal. In the first phase of identification, vice versa, the opposition of the incorporeal and corporeal is internal while outwardly they are united. The same is with the second phases of differentiation and identification.

Concentrating on the revelation of the Man's essence and nature Narekatsi considered the interrelation of soul and body in the planes of 1) unity, 2) controversiality or contradictoriness, 3)

unity or, more precisely, unity of opposites, despite the man's relationship with God, outside of that relationship, i.e. with regard to the man's inner plane.

At first the man was viewed as an earthly, corporeal being and as such, man was united: his nature was only earthly: he was earth, clay, substance. As such, he was not different from other corporal beings and was identical with stone (inanimate beings).

This initial unity was sublated with controversiality: Man is controversial by nature, consisting of two opposite origins, soul and body, which are always in struggle. This contradiction gives birth to the man's numerous torments:

*And although we ascend to you with the
airy ways of angels, the weight and density of
our first element, earth,
holds us down, and hinders us. (Pr. 86, A)*

With the contradictoriness of soul and body, the man is identified with animals: *a talking horse*.

Clearly, this contradiction should be sublated with unity, i.e. contradiction is to be overcome by unity (by a unity of higher level). Narekatsi differentiated two moments of overcoming; sublation: a) one of the opposite sides wins over the other thus contradiction becomes unity; b) the opposite sides harmonize with each other, despite their opposition, become a unity, i.e. the contradiction is sublated with the unity of opposites.

The first type of overcoming the contradiction has two sub-types. One of them is when the corporeal wins over the incorporeal, soul, mind: *and following our earthly nature, strayed like animals, we were laid low and bound to the earth, in some instances by disease, and others by cruelty, some by gluttony and passions, as if a ravenous beast is joined to our nature (Pr. 86, A)*, i.e. when the body suppresses the soul, winning over it; when “darkness” in the man wins over the divine “light”.

The other is when the incorporeal wins over the corporal. In this case, Narekatsi claimed that "the body is the prison of the soul", consequently realizing it, the rational man tries to be free of the bondage of the body and makes demands on extreme, absolute ascetics: mortification of flesh, suppression of earthly desires, thereby defeating the body and gaining the soul's victory. In this case, preference is given to the soul. But the overcoming of the contradiction in this way would not satisfy the great humanist; following the same direction, he came to the second type

of overcoming the contradiction, namely the sublation by unity: in this case preference was not given to the soul or body, to the spiritual (heavenly) or material (earthly) individually but to their unity, harmony: *you combined opposites in the make-up of man* (Pr. 86, A). As the four opposites of the man's make-up must be balanced, in harmony so must the two main opposites: soul and body be united, in harmony. In this part, Narekatsi transmitted another nuance, as well: gravity and coolness are qualities of the corporeal beginning while levity and heat are those of the soul.

In this case, ascetics was no longer extreme, absolute but was relative. Narekatsi did not demand to mortify body, body passions, needs and habits but to strengthen, perfect body and moderate one's passions. The medieval thinker surprisingly came to this wonderful idea: at the moment of controversy man is identical with beast, while the real human nature is displayed only at the moment of the unity of opposites, when the man identifies the controversiality of his essence and nature through his intelligence, and changes, PERFECTS it, seeks for and achieves the sublation of that controversiality through the unity of opposites, i.e. man humanizes himself, he himself raises his nature to the real human level. True, Narekatsi spoke of it in detail later: *everything counts in and for God*, consequently the man's changing, perfecting his nature is determined and foreseen by God too; however Narekatsi simultaneously claimed the opposite...

Thus, during the unity of opposites, man is identical with neither of beings lower than he; he is identical with himself, and the relative completeness, relative perfection of that phase of the existence of the man's nature is manifested in this.

2. Genesis of the Man

The “created” and “uncreated” categories in relation to the man

These two categories were opposite to each other and at the same time were united (even identical) for Narekatsi. And he attributed them not only to God but also to the man. In the Middle Ages it was very courageous of Narekatsi to attribute to God the quality of being “created”, origin, non-existence, emergence on the one hand, and the quality of being “uncreated” to the man, on the other hand. The author developed the following “logic” to justify his standpoint: First, God is uncreated while the man has been created, and as God is identical with the man, he is not only uncreated but has also been created, and as man is identical with God, he has not only been created but is also uncreated.

On the other hand, while considering the problem of the Trinity, Narekatsi attributed the qualities of both being uncreated and created (originating) to the Son, simultaneously claiming that any quality attributed to one of the persons of the Trinity was common for the whole Godhead; as the persons were identical, God was not only uncreated but also created. If at first,

as an initial thesis, Narekatsi claimed that God was uncreated and man had been created, later he added another statement to it: God is uncreated and created.

In accordance with the principle of completeness of contradiction, it follows (on the basis of combining these two judgments) that the man, too, has not only been created but is also uncreated: *to carry out the practical affairs of daily life like the all-giving right hand of God, that you might be called God* (Pr. 46, B).

Kheranyan marked in the notes of his translation that the word *Ստեղծող* (God) had been used in a relative sense, i.e. inventor, maker; I would add “creator” too.

It is also worth to note that by “uncreated” Narekatsi meant self-existent, self-caused, self-created (when a particular being has not been created by another being different from it and is the cause of its own emergence). As evidence of the man’s being uncreated, Narekatsi claimed that the man, evil by nature, was the cause of his existence, was self-created, self-existent (something which used to be attributed to God). And to be created, made, in relation to the man, meant to be conditioned by another being (God) different from the man.

And what does God’s being “created” mean? Here Narekatsi was on the point of reaching the emergence of an idea unnatural in the Middle Ages: God is conditioned by a being (beings) different from him. Nature, the Man are the cause of God’s existence (and coming into existence). Narekatsi made the justification of God’s existence dependent on the justification of the existence of nature. In the literary-philosophical system of the *Book of Lamentations*, Mary who symbolizes the whole world (*a breathing Eden*) was proclaimed as a *handmaid and Mother of God* and the Son (consequently, the whole Godhead) *your Son by birth, and your Lord by creation...*

Thus, these two categories were discussed in the system of sublations of sameness and difference of God and man too. First differentiating God from the man, Narekatsi attributed the quality of being uncreated to the first and the quality of being created to the second, then when identifying them, he attributed the two qualities to both of them: God is not only uncreated but has also been created, and man has not only been created but is also uncreated. In addition, it should be noted that in the Middle Ages those two categories were almost identified with the categories of “creator” and “creature”. The “Uncreated” meant creator and the “created” meant “creature”. So it was very courageous of Narekatsi to say that “God is also created”, something which in fact implied that God was a creator and a creature, likewise the attribution of the quality of being uncreated to the man meant that the man was also a creator. This approach was natural, more exactly, reasonable to a thinker who had come to the idea of the sameness of God and man. However, the dialectic thinker would not confine himself to this phase of identification, the

deductions of this level were not final truths, and he proceeded in his thoughts, sublating the sameness by a difference of higher level: though these two beings are uncreated and created, there is some difference; God is uncreated and created to the extent of his possibilities, viz. absolutely, and man to the extent of his possibilities, viz. relatively.

This deduction had deep implications. On the one hand, God's being uncreated was "thickened" which was acceptable to the Christian theology, but meanwhile God's being created, the negative quality of God was absolutized too, (regarding God as "created", i.e. creature, determined, was not enough for Narekatsi, in this case he "exaggerated" even more, regarding him as an absolutely created, conditioned creature). On the other hand, the man's being uncreated was "thinned" in comparison with the same quality of God, and Christianity approved that, but simultaneously he treated the quality of being "created" the same way, which resulted in an absolutely different quality. In this phase of differentiation, Narekatsi's seemed to come down in favour of God and rank him higher than the man by attributing absolute qualities to the first and relative ones to the second. However, he gave preference to the man in the same way as he treated God and man in the second phase of differentiation, during the consideration of the features of "existence" and "non-existence". Narekatsi preferred to be "created" relatively rather than absolutely, even if being relatively "created" meant being relatively and not absolutely "uncreated".

The conclusions of this phase of differentiation did not satisfy the dialectical thinker, either, and he made the next step, sublating the difference by the sameness of God and man, by a sameness of a higher level. So, in the next phase God was not only uncreated and created absolutely but also relatively as he was identical with the man at that level, and the man, too, was not only uncreated and created relatively but also absolutely, i.e. to the extent of God's possibilities. In this phase, God and Man were regarded as a creator and a creature absolutely and relatively.

Let us confine ourselves to this much, though according to Narekatsi's logic, this phase of sameness should be sublated by a difference of a new level too and so on.

Thus, it turned out that man was absolutely and relatively uncreated and created or was and was not created.

The creation of the man meant his differentiation from God to Narekatsi; the break of their union, the man's alienation, separation from God:

What am I worthy to ask of you in Prayer?

May I pray for

paradise, from which I strayed?

your magnificent glory, which I was denied?

your everlasting life, from which I was rejected?

the society of angels, from which I was expelled?

the company of the just, from which I was banished?

the living vine, from which I was ripped away?

the shoot of the plant of bliss, from which I dried up?

the grace of the flower of glory, from which I fell?

the legacy of praise, from which I was disinherited?

the devoted fatherly embrace, from which I pulled away? (Pr. 24, A)

As such, the created man, alienated from God, is *evil by nature*. However, at the same time the man's creation, emergence, his alienation from God is not a differentiation, on the contrary, man has been created as a good being (Adam before eating the forbidden fruit) and as such, he has not alienated from God, he is united and even identical with God (there have been cases of proclaiming Adam as God in the history of Christianity). In the same way the Son proceeding, coming from the Father, at the same time remains identical with him (in general, there has been an idea of the sameness of the Son and Adam in the Christian history...). Thus, on the one hand the creation is the differentiation of God and the man, on the other hand it is their identification. To all appearance, the man's *uncreatedness* was the same as his creation to Narekatsi.

The cause of the man's creation. Though Narekatsi stated in Prayer 46 of the *Book of Lamentations*: *I do not know or understand, by whom, in whose image or why I was created*, he tried to give the answers to these questions and apparently, he tried to emphasize the limitedness of the content of those questions, the impossibility of the man's full knowledge of those problems. And the question "By whom was I created?" was a courageous attempt to oppose to the medieval scholasticism. Anyway, Narekatsi could not but be concerned with the cause of the man's creation, and he tried to answer that question in his own way.

Let us present the elucidation of that problem through mental-logical experiment or experimentation in order to ground Narekatsi's solutions of some questions, problems once more on the background of his whole worldview or elucidate the truthfulness of our experiment consistently, according to his logic. Thus proceeding from the logic of his whole worldview, the

question “Who created the man?” has the following answer: “God did and did not create the man, so did and did not the man”. In the system of sublations of the sameness and difference of God and the man, the answer to the question ought to be this way:

I. Differentiation

G was the cause of the man’s creation

M was not the cause of man’s creation

Identification

G was and was not the cause of the man’s creation

So was and was not the man.

II. Differentiation

G was and was not the cause of the man’s creation absolutely

M was and was not the cause of the man’s creation relatively

Identification

G is and is not an absolute and relative cause

So is and is not the man.

And so on and so forth. This is the answer. Now let us consider how all the above-said correspond to Narekatsi’s views on the problem.

From the very beginning, Narekatsi claimed that the cause of the man’s coming into existence was God: *You made me in your glorious image* (Pr. 5, B); *All creation out of nothing by the hand of our maker* (Pr. 11, A); *I did not exist; you created me* (Pr. 18, A). It is clear why he considered God the cause of the man’s existence: God was the creator of everything, *beginning of all beginnings*, consequently he was the man’s *beginning* too. If God was the creator and the man was created, clearly, the man could not be the cause of his creation, as he could not have existed before coming into existence (later this idea was surprisingly sublated by Narekatsi).

This is the phase of the differentiation of God and man.

However, a powerful fact made (did it really make or did the great thinker find and use it with inner satisfaction?) the great thinker claim that the cause of the man’s coming into being, all the manifestations of the man’s essence, everything that was human, in general, was the man himself. And the fact was the man’s being evil by nature, his deeds were “sins”, man was dark, and God could not be the creator of the evil, sin, darkness: *But evil is not from your Godly bounty, source of all good, and darkness is not from your radiant light. And temptation is not*

part of your protection. No, I found these myself like a destructive child (Pr. 19, D); the vices I planted in myself (Pr. 21, B). All the vices, sins, consequently their bearer, the man, are nothing other than the tribe of foes (Pr. 7, A).

In Prayer 21 he said: ... *I of my own will mortgaged myself to death.*

If not God Almighty (*who there is no movement, no progress without*) but the man is the cause of his own death, then the cause of the man's creation was also the man (likewise, as it will be mentioned later, the man, man's deeds are of two natures, on the one hand, they lead the man to loss, corruption in the case when man's deeds are considered sins, on the other hand they are considered means of the man's existence and even the reason of God's great salvation).

In this way, Narekatsi made us come to the idea of the sameness of God and man, sublimate the difference by sameness as it turned out that God was and was not the cause of the man's existence, so was and was not the man.

Then Narekatsi again differentiated the man from God. God was and was not the cause of man's emergence to the extent of his possibilities; absolutely, while man's abilities of being and not being the cause of his emergence were more limited, relative. It was a new, a higher level differentiation of God and man. Narekatsi tried to sublimate this phase as well. He thought that God and man were also identical to the extent of their possibilities, that God was and was not the cause of the man's emergence not only divinely, absolutely but also to the extent of man's possibilities, relatively, and the man, too, was and was not the cause of his emergence not only to the extent of human possibilities, relatively but also absolutely, to the extent of God's possibilities, and so on and so forth. This would be enough but for one interesting fact. In the first stage of the identification of God and man, the sameness of God and man was dialectically controversial. They were identical in the first, external plane, as regards the form; both of them were the cause of the man's emergence. However, they were different inwardly, in the inner plane, in regard to their content: God was the cause of the origination of the man as a good being and not as an evil one, the contrary was with the man. Though in the above-mentioned chain of sublimate, Narekatsi claimed the sameness of God and the man formally, more exactly from the aspect of the form, and came to serious conclusions contradicting Christianity, however he did not sublimate the difference between God and the man; God remained (and did not) the cause of the emergence of the man as a good being, and the man was the cause of the being, evil by nature.

Thus, to content oneself with this much would mean to remain within the boundaries of the Christian solution of this problem: God created man (Adam) as a good being, endowing him with free will, and it was not God's fault that the man became evil, chose the evil existence (ate

the forbidden fruit) willingly; viz. the origination of the man as an evil being, and so the man ought to be charged with that.

And Narekatsi would consistently come out of the bounds of even Christian and non-Christian Neo-Platonism. Proceeding from the principle of the “completeness of contradiction”, the great dialectician said: *because my composition mixes the voice of good news with mournful protests, bringing justice and judgment* (Pr. 38, C), i.e. his “logic” made him claim “this” simultaneously stating its opposite “that”. Essentially, he deduced the judgment “God was the cause of the man as a good being and the man was the cause of the man as an evil being”, stating the contradiction between God and the man, and compared it with another judgment which also stated the difference of God and the man. Here it is: “God was the cause of the man as an evil being and man was the cause of the man as a good being”. Through this comparison Narekatsi came to the conclusion that God was (and was not) the cause of the man as a good and as an evil being, so was (and was not) the man, consequently God and the man were identical.

Let us consider how he deduced God’s being the cause of the man as an evil being, God’s being the cause of evil, in general. Maybe this was the most important, daring outcome of his mental searching. While claiming that the man was the cause of evil; *our wickedness is innate*, and consequently man was the cause of the man as an evil being, Narekatsi simultaneously claimed, or more exactly, made us come to the opposite viewpoint. He wrote in Prayer 54:

I am not proud, for I am justly scorned.

I am not arrogant, for I am blameworthy.

I am not haughty, for I am abandoned.

I do not boast, for I am reduced to silence.

I do not rebel, for I am mocked...

*Nor do I, like them, do anything except at the pleasure
of your commandments, the doer of good.*

So, it turned out that God was responsible for the man’s “sins”, “misdeeds”. Strikingly and amazingly he never said anything contradicting Christianity, he just emphasized God’s omnipotence, all-powerfulness, meanwhile there opened up a possibility of making a very mighty deduction: as God is all-powerful he is also the creator and cause of the evil, darkness and sin, or else his omnipotence is out of the question.

Narekatsi grounded it on the fact that by creating the man as a good being, endowing him with free will, God knew in advance what would happen to the man but he created him all the same:

*Knowing in advance my current trials,
you did not thrust me from your
sight. No, even foreseeing my misdeeds,
you fashioned me. (Pr. 18, A)*

Now let us see how he deduced that the man was (and was not) the cause of the emergence of the man as a good being. If God was the cause of the emergence of the man as a good being and the man is identical with God then the man was the cause of the emergence of the man as a good being too. Narekatsi stated it in an indirect way. Firstly, when considering the man's nature, we saw that man was the cause of the man as an honest and a good being. Secondly, the categories "existence" and "emergence" were not only different but also identical for Narekatsi, as well as the concepts "creation" and "return". He thought that the man could and should contribute to his existence with his good deeds, as a good, honest being, for the man's every "step" and action (of course, if it was good and aimed at the perfection, existence of the good) meant continuation of the emergence and existence of the real, perfect, good man (one "phase" of the origination). Thus, man was even the cause of his existence as a good being; consequently, he was the cause of his origination too.

If a good deed can be a cause of God's great salvation, (Narekatsi gave such value and significance to his *Book of Lamentations* and by God's great salvation, he meant the recompletion of all) the man can be the cause of his salvation, recompletion, recreation as a good and perfect being.

Thus, first expressing the idea that God was the cause of the man's origination as a good being and was not the cause of the man as an evil being, while the man was the contrary, Narekatsi then identified God and the man, regarding both of them being and not being the cause of the man as good and the man as evil.

Though this circle of Narekatsi's judgments kept on developing in a direction stating that both God and man as good and evil were the cause of the man as a good and evil being, we shall stop at this.

Now let us reveal from what the man was created. The cause of the man's emergence was outside the man (it was both God and he himself), likewise is the case with this question. During

the consideration of this question, it turned out that Narekatsi had two mutually exclusive and at the same time mutually supplementary answers to it: the man was created out of something different from him; outside him and at the same time out of him. The thing outside and different from the man (and Nature), from which he was created is called “nothing” or “non-being”: *the creator of all out of nothing* (Pr. 22, E); *I contemplate with my mind’s eye all the creation out of nothing by the hand of our maker* (Pr. 11, A). However, as we see, God was everything and at the same time nothing for Narekatsi, consequently, God was the thing, outside and different from the man, out of which the man was made. So, when Narekatsi said that God was the *beginning of all beginnings* it should be perceived in two ways: firstly, God was the beginning subject of all beginnings, the subject of the process of beginning, creator, maker, and secondly, he was an object from which all beginnings originated. Narekatsi’s judgment *everything is from you* directed to God should be perceived in the same way, too.

The deduction of the idea that God was also the object of the man’s emergence is very important, as well. The great thinker directs the reader’s mind to the same path, this time in regard to another problem: if the man originated from God who is not only nothing but is also everything then man originated from not only nothing but also from everything, from the hierarchy, gradation of the whole diversity. The fact that *all beings were created* for the man proves that. The succession, dependence in the origination of the whole diversity and the man being regarded as the top, the crown of that diversity, it evidence that the man was made from the very diversity prior to him.

Narekatsi did not try to go deep into the question of the man’s origination from the man, though he left room for it. What he avoided saying in this case, he said when considering the question of *the man’s return to the man*. The man has proceeded from man who is everything and nothing.

Narekatsi also slightly touched upon the question of what God and the Man created the Man with. On the one hand, he claimed that God created everything, consequently the man too, through Word: *who with but an utterance created the entire universe* (Pr. 63, C), on the other hand he said that *they* (angels adorned in light -S. P.) *are created through word and we are created with your hand*.

Comparing and contrasting what has been said with Narekatsi’s other judgments on this question, one can draw far going conclusions which, however, correspond to the general spirit, trend of Narekatsi’s philosophical system. For instance, he said *all the creation out of nothing by the hand of our maker* (Pr. 11, A), i.e. through work, from nothing. This is a controversial, antinomic judgment, which, however, has a way of solution. According to our author, God created everything out of nothing through his Word and man by his hand (through work) from

the *original matter*. In spite of these beliefs, the author suddenly claimed that God had created the man from nothing with his hand.

According to the initial theses if the man was created out of nothing then he was created through Word and if he was created by God's hand then he was created through the *original matter*. But it seems Narekatsi synthesized those two diametrically opposite viewpoints into one judgment: man was created from nothing but by God's hand.

I want to emphasize that this judgment is not casual in the system of Narekatsi's views; he put it into "circulation" being fully aware of it, directing the reader's mind to new conclusions. On the one hand, it follows from that judgment that the so-called "non-being" or "nothing" was the *original matter* from which the man was created with hand, i.e. the original matter is identified with nothing (this tendency existed in medieval Armenia, Hovhan Vorotnetsi). On the other hand, nothing is different from and opposite to the original matter, (the latter itself has originated from nothing) and is not identical with it, consequently the man as everything else was created from nothing not with God's hand, work, but through word. These two diametrically opposite viewpoints are united, synthesized in an antinomic judgment which expresses the difference, contradiction and the unity, sameness of not only "nothing" and the "original matter" but also of the two main means of the man's creation; Word and work (wish and ability). Word and work ("hand" is the symbol of work) are opposite and different because "nothing" and the "original matter" are opposite and different. Man was created out of nothing through word and out of the original matter with hand. However, Word and work are not only opposite and different but also identical and united because "nothing" and the "original matter" are identical, that's why Narekatsi said that the man had been created out of nothing with "hand". Why with "hand" and not through Word? The reason is that hand (work) and Word are identical, and in such a case, this judgment would be equal and identical with another one: man was created out of the original matter through Word.

It turned out that God had created man through Word and hand (work). As the man was identical with God then the man had created man through his word and hand. (This conclusion comes from the logic of Narekatsi's views but the author himself did not go deep into it because of well-known reasons. Instead, when elucidating the problem of the man's return, recreation, salvation, renewal he thoroughly considered the question of how man achieved his renewal, return, recreation through his word (intelligence) and work. As the return, renewal was not only different but also identical with the creation for Narekatsi, he thought that the man could not only return himself through word and work but the man had also caused his creation through the same

means. If Narekatsi had a chance to be consistent, he would display the following approach, which directly stems from the logic of his views).

Narekatsi put the question of the comparison of God's and the man's word and work and solved it in his own way. God's Word and work, wish and ability are identical while those of the man are different: *Knowing full well what was improper, I strayed from the path, sinning in all ways, in all things* (Pr. 20, B). David Anghaght's influence is apparent here: God can do as much as he wants to, while the man cannot.

But God and the man were identical for Narekatsi, consequently God's Word and work were not only identical but also different (at least the fact that angels were created through Word, while the man with God's hand, i.e. work, evidences that), and the man's word and work were not only different but also identical (for Narekatsi, thinking of evil was equal to doing it). This sameness of God and man was sublated: God's Word and work are absolutely identical and different while the man's word and work, wish and ability are relatively identical. Like David Anghaght, our author thought that God could do as much as he wanted to, while the man (the perfect philosopher for David Anghaght) could want as much as he could do.

We have already spoken about the essence of Word, the interrelation of God's and the man's rational (cognitive) capabilities, now let us dwell upon the essence of Work, the interrelation of God's and the man's practical capabilities.

The essence of work consists in the fact that it is the means and at the same time the essence of existence (non-existence), creation (corruption), and return (the concrete work, deed is also a part of all that). Work is the movement (is identical with movement) or is its part (in the same way, non-work, not working was rest for Narekatsi). As the movement and rest are the means of existence and non-existence, and are themselves the existence and non-existence (movement is also non-existence, rest is not only non-existence but also existence), so are the work and inaction.

Variants

1. G- potent

M- impotent

1. G- potent and impotent

So is the Man

2. G- absolutely potent (omnipotent) and impotent

M- relatively potent and impotent

2. G- absolutely and relatively potent and impotent

So is the Man

Narekatsi differentiated (not only in regard to the man but also to God) two types of actions, deeds: evil and good. At first, he considered all the manifestations of human nature evil, “sins”, as deeds of a being, alienated and different from God, while he considered God’s deeds as good. Then he deduced that the man was also a doer of goodness, even *distributor of the parcels of God’s light with his right hand*, (Pr. 78, C), then he identified and differentiated God’s and human deeds.

Narekatsi differentiated or identified good and evil deeds from two points of view, in two assessment systems, if one may put it that way: what is unpleasant for God is pleasant for the man and vice versa. It turns out that what is evil from God’s point of view is good from the man’s point of view and vice versa.

A deed aimed at the man’s corruption and not at his existence or emergence is unpleasant for the man; it is evil from his point of view, while the same deed is pleasant for God, as it is not against God’s existence. By the way, it follows from this that God is also the cause of death, corruption, and the man’s corruption, loss is also pleasant and even necessary to God.

You did not make death or take joy in human misery, (Pr.15, D). However, human death, loss contributes to God’s existence and recompletion (through the corruption of body, the soul of the man returns to God; *places left empty by the fallen angels, might be filled with human beings* (Pr. 34, M), so that is necessary; consequently pleasant to God.

The deed aimed at the man’s existence (physical existence, aimed at satisfying the needs of the body, etc.) is unpleasant and evil from God’s point of view as it is against the incorporeal God. But our author was not satisfied with this much; as the above mentioned was viewed from the point of view of the difference of God as incorporeal, and man as corporeal, so the good and evil deeds should also be viewed from the point of view of the sameness of God and man:

If a work contributes to the man’s existence (coming into existence), it does contribute to God’s existence, too (the man “plays” not only with his existence but also with the existence of all). Thus both God’s and man’s deeds are of two natures: are evil and good, both absolutely and relatively.

The problem had two aspects for Narekatsi: “differentiation” and “integration” in modern phraseology. Narekatsi characterized those two aspects with two ranges of concepts: 1) Division, dispersion, degradation, decomposition, spreading, disappearance, thinning, specification, etc. 2) Unity, assembling, renewal (or recompletion), thickening, completion, generalization, etc.

Those were, rather, the two types, forms of the Work. Those ranges were continued, completed by concepts of social importance:

1) to submit, to be ruled, to be under a yoke, to be humble, to confess, to lose, to be defeated, to be a slave, to be a debtor, etc. 2) to subdue, to rule, to make humble, to revolt, to defeat, to win, to be free, to be a creditor, etc.

The author used those last two ranges of concepts not only in their social sense but also in a wider sense. Those concepts were used to express the relationships of the part and the whole (Pr. 46): parts of the body are *united under one yoke*, wholly submit to the body, depend on, are subordinate to it, at the same time the body, ruling over its parts depends on and submits to each of them to some extent, as the change of any part results in the change of the whole...

Narekatsi not only differentiated those two aspects of work but also identified them:

Both unruly sin and deep regret

plunge us into damnation, being

essentially similar even though from different sources.

But when compared they share the same character flaws:

one doubts the strength of the Almighty's

hand like a cowardly skeptic,

while the other, like a wild beast,

brutally cuts the thread of hope. (Pr. 10, A)

Thus, regret and bowing are identical with sin, revolt, disobedience as both of them lead the man to loss, corruption (of course, later, Narekatsi revealed that both of them led also to existence, life, eternity).

The author believed that by submitting, losing, regretting, being humble one could subdue and win... He meant this by saying: *Indeed, blessed is the phrase "I have sinned" that gives the heart a hope ... victorious creative force* (Pr. 27, C); *You run after me in my obstinacy, but do not lose patience* (Pr. 58, C), i.e. God won by losing, subdued by submitting. To submit, to be defeated, to be humble also mean (are identical with) to subdue, win and rule. The dialectician came to the conclusion that

...sometimes... in the middle of wild, unkempt horses,

can be a tame sheep,

in the midst of beastly dogs, we may find a sacrificial lamb,

and mildness amid harshness,

perfection amid defects,

humility amid haughtiness...

purity amid perversity...

reconciliation amid hostility... (Pr. 31, D)

Narekatsi also deduced the opposite. In the same way, thickening and thinning, spreading and gathering, specification and generalization are not only different from, opposite to each other, but are also identical and united (*Your treasure increases more by sharing than gathering*). It refers to both God's and the man's deeds which presuppose absolute and relative "shrinkage and expansion", "submission and subduing".

Narekatsi's views on this question, too, were closely related to the viewpoint existing in the repository of the Armenian philosophical thought before him. First, one sees contrast, differentiation of God's and man's creative capabilities in Anahaght's works (God is the creator, the man is a creature). Then there is also observed identification but a relative, not an absolute one: the man (a perfect philosopher for Anahaght) is like God, "God can do as much as he wants to, a perfect philosopher wants as much as he can", the man is a creator, too, only of limited abilities. Differentiating God's and man's creative capabilities Anahaght, passed on to their identification but did not put an emphasis on it and immediately sublated the sameness by a difference of a higher level: God's creative ability is absolute and unlimited, the man's creative ability is relative, limited, in other words God is an absolute creator, the man is a relative creator. D. Anahaght did not proceed any more in his conclusions and contented himself with this (the second) level of differentiation.

Narekatsi had the same views; perhaps, rationally realized process of the development of Narekatsi's thought was comparatively more consistent. He tried to infer all the possible conclusions of the sameness and difference in every stage of differentiation and identification. At first, in the differentiation stage, God was proclaimed as a Creator, the man was a creature, then in the identification stage, man was regarded not only as a creature but also a creator, maker, begetter, and God was not only a Creator but also – . Narekatsi did not say directly that God was

a creature but he skillfully slightly hinted at that, emphasizing that the incarnate God was for Mary; for the human: *your Son by birth, and your Lord by creation*. Mary was proclaimed as the *handmaid and Mother of God* at the same time. Narekatsi put a mutual genetic dependence between God and man; they were mutual cause and result. This viewpoint was not alien to Narekatsi, it was harmoniously interwoven with his ontological system where the whole and the part, material and non-material (body and soul), to cut it short, all opposites were interdependent and transmuted into each other.

In the phase of identification, not only man was identified with God (as it was in the case of D. Anhaght: man is a creator too) but also God was identified with the man (like the man, God is also passive and not only an active creator).

Like D. Anhaght, Narekatsi sublated this sameness by difference too: the man is an absolute creator and creature (he is absolutely *Son by birth, and Lord by creation*) and the man is a creator and creature relatively, to the extent of his possibilities (the *handmaid and Mother of God* relatively, i.e. God's cause and result, creator, maker as well as created and made by God). In this phase of differentiation, man's creative abilities were limited in comparison with those of God. The creative man was inferior to the omnipotent God as God had created out of nothing and the man – from what already existed. Man was not able to create out of nothing; the limitedness of the man's creative abilities in comparison with God's omnipotence consists in this.

Here it is necessary to state an interesting fact. On the one hand, Narekatsi considered the creation from nothing a greater power than the creation from what already existed, the renewal of the existing, as it expressed God's creative priority over the man's creative capabilities. On the other hand, proceeding from the necessity of renewal, recompletion of the man and everything, he ranked the power of the renewal and creation from what already existed higher than the power of creation out of nothing:

Neither the heavens with all their raiment, nor the angels in their brilliance,

nor the earth and humanity and their wonders,

nor the expanse of the seas and all in them,

nor the abyss in its infiniteness and all in it,

exalted you as sublimely as your sympathy toward me,

...For the power to restore what is worn-out to

its former grandeur is greater than creating anew. (Pr. 49, A, B)

However, the great tinker did not confine himself to this phase of differentiation too; he sublated it with sameness: as God and man are not only different but also identical, “nothing” and “everything” are identical too; consequently, God’s and man’s creative capabilities are identical too; God and the man are absolute and relative creators. God creates not only out of nothing but also out of everything, from the existing, and the man, too, creates not only out of the already existing but also out of nothing, man is god to the extent of God’s possibilities, absolutely.

Though Narekatsi did not state it directly, it follows from the logical development of his ideas. The author even dared to say: *I shudder at the thought that my own actions, the actions of a mere mortal (man) go too far; much further than Yours.*

There is no need to be surprised at this viewpoint because it was sublated by Narekatsi too *So come Lord, do not let the gestures of a human hand seem grander than yours. Or those who have healthy organs are not in need of a physician’s care, and those with good vision have no need of a guide* (Pr. 59).

And this chain of sublations went on and on.

God’s and the man’s works are finite and infinite, creative capabilities are unlimited and limited, absolute and relative.

Till now we have developed the concept of “the creation of the man” in terms of uncovering and revealing the cause and means as well as on the basis of what man was created out of. However, the theme of “the creation of the man” has still to be developed. It is at least necessary to discover 1) the nature of the cause of the creation, 2) the nature of the result of the creation and 3) how the man was created.

While considering the cause we dwelled upon the fact that the man was created as good and evil, i.e. we touched upon the nature of the result of the creation, to a certain extent. However, it should be added that for Narekatsi the man’s nature was not confined to the qualities of good and evil. As we saw, Narekatsi characterized the man with two ranges of concepts; accordingly those concepts should be put into “circulation” here. Let us mention just a few of them: the man was created as 1) a being and non-being (everything and nothing), 2) eternal and temporary (immortal and mortal), 3) uniform and controversial, 4) a master of all; a whole, and a servant; a part, etc., as incorporeal (soul, word) and corporeal, as endless, infinite and finite...

The same refers to God and the man as causes of creation. All that has been said takes the following shape in the chain of sublations of sameness and difference: in the first phase of differentiation, God, having only positive qualities, created a being with only and only positive qualities as *evil is not from your Godly bounty, source of all good, and darkness is not from your*

radiant light. And temptation is not part of your protection. (Pr. 19, D). Thus, God was not the creator of evil and he had endowed man with only and only positive qualities. God as eternal, united, incorporeal, infinite created the man as identical with him; eternal, united, incorporeal, infinite, etc. And the man, as a being with negative qualities, created the man as identical with him; evil, temporary, controversial, corporeal, finite, etc.

In the phase of identification, God as a being with both positive and negative qualities, created man as a being with positive and negative qualities, so did the man.

In the second phase of differentiation, God as a being with absolutely positive and negative qualities, created the man with absolute qualities while the man as a being with relative qualities (both positive and negative) created the man as such.

In the next phase of identification, both the man and God, as beings with absolute and relative features, created the man as such.

Now let us move on to the forms of creation. In accordance with the same logic, it turns out that God and the man created the man absolutely and relatively, finitely and infinitely, directly and indirectly, necessarily and unnecessarily. To Narekatsi's mind, *all beings were created* for the man. This is perceived in two senses: the man was created out of nothing, immediately, in parallel with the whole diversity. That was why he claimed *all creation out of nothing* (Pr. 11, A). But then he developed the idea that first all beings were created, then the man was; all beings were created for the creation of the man; the man was the crown of creation, the final phase. The primordial matter (corporeal light) was created out of nothing, the stars (luminaries) were created out of the primordial matter, *then the mass of the earth floating in air*, then the animate beings and at last the man was created, i.e. the man was created through the medium of the whole diversity. The fact that *God is an unreachable distance, immediate closeness* (Pr. 23, A) for every being, consequently for the man too, also confirms this idea.

In terms of structure, this means that all are in God, so God is an *unreachable distance* for every being and the man, the unity of the infinite is infinitely mediated, is distant and unapproachable for its part, constituent. But at the same time God is in everyone, so the unity of the infinite is in its finite part, accordingly every finite being is also a unity of the infinite, and the unity of the infinite is *immediate closeness* for every being, i.e. God (as a symbol of infinity, unity) is identical with the individual being, man, that is why their interrelation, dependence is immediate. In terms of creation, it means that God created the man directly, without anything and at the same time through everything, through the hierarchy of the whole diversity.

Man was created in the form of *exceeding all the bounds of measure and weight, by the flow of your power and exceeding goodness* (Pr. 35, A). God just accidentally said and created man as

well as the whole universe, or in the process of self-alienation, incarnation the man suddenly came into existence. The Man's accidental creation was a result of God's being humanist, his sudden goodness. But Narekatsi believed that God could not but be humanist, good, omnipotent, consequently he created man out of necessity: he created man proceeding from the necessity of being good, humanist as he was called humanist, just not for the creation of angles, universe, etc. but for saving the man, i.e. he was called humanist in relation to man.

Let us consider this question from the point of view of structure. Narekatsi wrote:

*for before you created everything,
before the creation of the heavens
with the immortal choir of praise and
the earthly thinking beings,
you yourself in your perfection were already glorified* (Pr. 34)

This means that the *unblemished God* did not need the man, consequently he created the man accidentally. But at the same time Narekatsi claimed that God did not want even one of the small beings to be lost, and the man's loss was not pleasant to God, it did not make him happy, and God was in thirst of the man's existence, salvation. So, God was in need of the man, he created the man necessarily (out of the necessity of his perfection). *If you destroy us, judging us by our deeds, your glory will not be diminished, but if you accept us, you will be exalted as befits your majesty* (Pr. 48, H). It follows from the dialectical development of this judgment that man was created both necessarily and accidentally.

Before ending this chapter, I would like to elaborate on the creation of the man showing the transmutation of concepts, the development of opposite concepts into each other.

Phase 1. 1) Incorporeal (heavenly, soul, word) God created, gave birth to the incorporeal man, identical with him.

Here, the created is, evidently, the man's soul; it is the man but from the sphere of soul (the heavenly man). The symbolism of such a creation can be seen in the origin of God's Word. In this case the man's soul (man as a soul) has come into existence not as an individual soul, as a *glimmering ray of your* (God's) *cloud of light* but as the *cloud of light* itself, i.e. as a universal soul which encompasses all the individual souls. That is to say, God as a unity has created the

man as a unity (a unity of souls); by tightening, shrinking, God, as a unity of souls, has become a man, a soul or a human soul, which encompasses all souls.

Thus, the eternal originates from the eternal (God as eternal), the infinite from the infinite, etc., or any category expressing a positive quality turns into itself.

2) The corporeal man created, engendered the man identical with him – a corporeal. The man, as a mortal, limited, imperfect (incomplete, unripe) part, engendered a being, endowed with the same qualities.

In this case, negative categories have turned into themselves; by expanding, the man, as a mortal, a part, has engendered a being identical with him.

It should be marked that the expansion, differentiation, corruption, split were viewed by Narekatsi as negative qualities and were attributed to the man, limited beings; as typical of the finite, mortal, part, inferior; the unripe tried to become ripe *Trying to be completely pure, I was corrupted completely* (Pr. 55, F).

To be more precise: the whole is complete, extensive, superior, ruler, mature, unlimited, endless, immeasurable, eternal, while the man as a part is not complete, extensive; he is imperfect, inferior, “unripe”, limited, mortal, shrunk. Therefore, the part tries to become a whole (necessarily and accidentally), the limited to spread, the shrunk to expand, the measureable to be beyond measure, the unripe to become ripe, the imperfect to become perfect, the small tries to reach the big, accordingly the unity tries to split, the abstract to become concrete, the unlimited to be limited, the extensive to shrink, the superior to become inferior, the big to become small, etc., for the unlimited cannot become more unlimited, the complete cannot become more complete, the extensive can never become more extensive, the big cannot become bigger or the small can’t become smaller (it is already small), the shrunk cannot get more shrunk, the limited cannot become more limited, the part cannot become more parted.

Do not wound me. I am already injured.

Do not condemn me. I am already punished.

Do not push me. I have already fallen.

...for who can reach morning and

at the light of daybreak expect dark...

or at the care of God’s right hand expect suffering? (Pr. 17)

So, God as a unity, unlimited, etc. must (necessarily) shrink, become limited, while the man, as a part and limited, must expand, spread, etc. God the incorporeal, the heavenly light (Word) must thicken, engendering man the corporeal: dark and shadowy. God as unlimited must become limited creating the limited man, and the man as limited and corporeal, must create the unlimited, incorporeal man by expanding, spreading, ruling, becoming complete. In this case, each of the opposite categories, expressing opposite qualities, transforms into its opposite: the incorporeal into corporal, the eternal into temporary, the infinite into finite, etc.

By thickening God the incorporeal, the heavenly light (shadowless light), created the corporeal man by the example of the incarnation of God's Word:

You humbled yourself, the exalted one.

You became meek, the awesome one.

You were revealed, Lord beyond words.

You were defined, the boundless one.

You were measured, the non-examinable one.

You focused light, the radiant one.

You became human, the incorporeal one.

You became tangible, the immeasurable one.

You took shape, you who are beyond quality. (Pr. 34, M)

And man the corporal, by expanding, or more exactly by "thinning", clearing away, spreading as darkness, density, fog, became an incorporeal man, the divine, heavenly light (Word). In the first case, man was an extinguished ray, in the second case man came into existence through the extinguished becoming radiant. The second case was when Narekatsi called for the man's being ascetic, suppressing body passions, mortifying the flesh, as a result causing the existence of an incorporeal, eternal, immortal man, the heavenly light (Word, soul).

However, for good reasons, the judgments of this phase did not content Narekatsi and he moved on to a new phase (so that it would be a mistake to characterize Narekatsi's worldview only at the level of this phase, it would mean not to understand Narekatsi). He sublated this phase of differentiation with a phase of identification. 1) The eternal, incorporeal, infinite God not only shrunk, became limited but also expanded, spread and that way he created the corporeal and incorporeal, eternal and temporary, infinite and finite man, etc. 2) The same was with the man.

In this case, not only the sameness of God and the man and their qualities are manifested but also the sameness of shrinking and expanding, thickening and thinning, becoming large and small, etc. Let us concentrate on the moments of that process in detail.

God created the man. 1) By shrinking, thickening eternally, the incorporeal God brought forth the corporal and temporary man. This is already clear. It should only be added that this moment has two cases: a) God brought forth the corporeal, finite man not only by shrinking and thickening infinitely, necessarily, directly, but also b) by shrinking and thickening finitely, unnecessarily, indirectly, he created the corporeal, finite man.

2) By shrinking, thickening infinitely God the incorporeal created the incorporeal, eternal, endless man, i.e. a being identical with him. This moment of the man's creation symbolizes the Son's origination from the Father. The Son had originated from the Father but was identical with him, was incorporeal, eternal like him, and as the man was identical with the Father (Narekatsi often emphasized, particularly, the man's and the Son's unity, sameness); consequently, the man had originated from God as an incorporeal, eternal being. This moment has two cases too: a) thickening and shrinking directly and indirectly, infinitely and finitely, necessarily and unnecessarily, God brought forth the incorporeal, eternal man. The small originated from the big through the latter's becoming small, the big originated from the small through the latter's becoming big; this is clear and natural but how can the big originate from the big through the latter's becoming small or the small originate from the small through the latter's becoming big? These were the questions the great thinker was deeply concerned with. He was fully aware of all those complications and he sublated the difference (opposition) of the big and small, their becoming big and small, gathering and spreading, completion and partition, shrinkage and expansion, thickening and thinning by sameness. That was why he claimed that there was humility amid haughtiness, sublimity amid humbleness; there is smallness in bigness, shrinkage in expansion and vice versa:

Trying to be completely pure, I was corrupted completely (Pr. 55, F); *I have risen up...but then curling back into myself, as if rejected* (Pr. 20, E); *You, who are more enriched by giving than receiving* (Pr. 31, A). Thus, first he claimed that it was impossible to defeat the defeated, to stir the stirred, to shake the shaken in the sense that it was inadmissible to belittle the small, to exalt the exalted, to shrink the shrunk, to expand the expanded as the small did not need to become smaller or the big become bigger, likewise *those who have healthy organs are not in need of a physician's care* (Prayer 59, B), but later he sublated dialectically what he had claimed; the small could become smaller, the big bigger, it was possible to split by becoming complete and

become complete by splitting. Becoming bigger the big brought forth the big, the small gave rise to the big becoming smaller, the big gave rise to the small and big becoming bigger, etc.

God is also identical with the man in that by expanding, spreading he has brought forth the man.

1) By expanding and thinning, the incorporeal and eternal God brought forth the incorporeal, eternal, endless man. By expanding, spreading, the divine light, the heavenly, incorporeal light caused the existence of incorporeal light.

This moment of the creation of man is identical with the Son's birth. The Son is *the Father's radiant dawn* (Pr. 78, B), a ray which is, however, identical with light, i.e. it is limitless, endless, eternal like the Father, the source of light, who brings forth everything by expanding, spreading.

By expanding, spreading, radiating, God has brought forth a being identical with him; the Son, and as the man is identical with God, by expanding, God has brought forth the incorporeal, eternal man.

2) But due to the same expansion, spreading, split the contrary occurred: the incorporeal, eternal God brought forth the corporeal, temporary man. By spreading, expanding, thinning the divine, heavenly light caused the dark, gloomy, the corporeal to come into existence. Through the expansion of the infinite, the finite came into existence.

By expanding and shrinking God as corporeal, mortal and limited brought forth the corporeal, mortal and incorporeal, eternal man.

The Man created the man. By expanding and shrinking, the corporeal, mortal and incorporeal, eternal man brought forth the corporeal and incorporeal, immortal and eternal man.

In the next, third phase the sameness was sublated by a difference of a higher level.

- 1) The absolutely corporeal and incorporeal (body and soul) God, expanding and shrinking absolutely, brought forth the absolutely corporeal and incorporeal man,
- 2) The relatively corporeal and incorporeal man (body and soul), expanding and shrinking relatively, begot the relatively corporeal and incorporeal man.

And only in the fourth stage, through the sublation of this difference by sameness of a new level, Narekatsi came to the idea that by expanding and shrinking absolutely and relatively, God and the man, as absolute and relative, as soul and body, brought forth the absolutely and relatively corporeal and incorporeal man. Only in this phase it became clear that the man had come into existence as limitless and limited, corporeal and incorporeal (Word, soul) in the result of absolute and relative expansion and shrinkage, and by expanding and shrinking, God, as

absolutely corporeal, brought forth the absolutely (limitlessly) corporal and incorporeal and relatively corporeal and incorporeal man. The same was with God as absolutely incorporeal.

3. The Man's Return

Man who did not exist once, came into existence but as he was mortal he was to cease to exist one day. Narekatsi was concerned with this fact most of all and he sought a way to avoid loss: *I apply these words to myself searching to sustain my lost soul* (Pr. 70, A); *And now, what will you do, my lost soul? Where will you hide? How will you live? And how can you escape the prison of your sin? Your transgressions are many and your punishments countless... The pit is vile and the torment eternal. Hell is all-encompassing and the blizzard unrelenting.* (Pr. 8, A).

“Where can I find my salvation?” this was the question that bothered the great thinker and after long meditation, he came to the following conclusion: the emergence of the man (as mortal) was his differentiation, alienation, separation from God:

May I pray for

paradise, from which I strayed?

your magnificent glory, which I was denied?

your everlasting life, from which I was rejected?

the society of angels, from which I was expelled?

the company of the just, from which I was banished?

the living vine, from which I was ripped away?

the shoot of the plant of bliss, from which I dried up?

the grace of the flower of glory, from which I fell?

the legacy of praise, from which I was disinherited?

the devoted fatherly embrace, from which I pulled away?

Or may I pray

that I might be honored with clothing of light,

from which I was stripped?

that I might hope for the return to my creator,

from whom I was estranged?

that I might turn my desires to the light,

from which I strayed?

that I might join the body of Christ,

from which I was rejected?

that I might touch the hand of him,

from whom I was separated?

that I might seek refuge in the sanctuary,

from which I was spurned? (Pr. 24, A, B)

And as God is the beginning and end of everything the only way of salvation is the return to rest, God, i.e. the renewal of the broken unity: *having received union with the same spirit* (Pr. 32, D); thus return is the moment of the sameness or union of God and the man. Here the influence of the neo-platonic traditions is observed: everything originates from the unity, God, and is reduced to him.

* * *

The whole system of Narekatsi's views was an endless chain of sublations, negations (an upward, spiral movement of thought). The main concepts of this chain were God and the man. At first 1) as opposed to each other, God and the man were differentiated: God is eternal, infinite, all-knowing, united (non-controversial), good while the man is temporary, finite, unripe, controversial, evil, etc.

This phase of differentiation was sublated by sameness: 2) the man is not only temporary but also eternal and God is not only eternal but also temporary.

Then again followed a differentiation: 3) the man is god to the extent of his possibilities; God is absolutely good and perfect.

4) The next phase was again identification: *I turn to you for forgiveness not on the meager human scale, but with the full undiminishing measure of loving kindness shown toward us by our Savior Jesus Christ* (Pr. 28, A). So, man is not only relatively but also absolutely good and evil, eternal and temporary.

During the differentiation, the genius poet and thinker gave way to despair and criticized himself because God was kind and he was evil, and the man could not be God. But when thinking of sameness, he reassured himself, became courageous and proud. He became upset, then happy again, he gave way to despair and then reassured himself: *I take heart a bit, then feel yet more abandoned. I gear up and then as quickly slacken* (Pr. 71, B).

Thus, the mutual negation, sublation of the phases of identification and differentiation was manifested in a mixture of moods and emotional states, being a storm of feelings and thoughts. And it would be more correct to term the whole system of Narekatsi's views as literary-philosophical because his thought and emotion were interdependent and transmuted into each other. During the differentiation, the thought (that the man is not God, eternal) became the cause of stirring up of emotions and inner burning, and those psychological tortures made Narekatsi go deep into thought again and find a solution. And the solution was the idea of the sameness of God and the man (nature), which was achieved through zigzags of thought, and this idea became the cause of good mood, positive emotions, thus the thought stirred up emotion and vice versa.

Another important fact should be noted: Narekatsi or the lyrical hero would not always give way to despair; on the contrary, during one of the phases of differentiation, however striking and odd it may seem, he was pleased with the idea that the man was not God. Narekatsi realized that to be God meant to be deprived of everything that was human and earthly, and to be absolutely eternal meant to be absolutely temporary too, and so he preferred to live *among the feeling, breathing beings destined for the dark grave* (Pr. 30, B), to be relatively eternal, as it meant relative mortality. Thus the great poet preferred the earthly life for the divine, heavenly life. This was his great achievement, the heroic deed of the representative of Renaissance. This moment was again sublated, and he again sought to reach God, but being negated, this idea would not lose its true value for Narekatsi.

There were two types of return for Narekatsi: the identification of the man and God, and the differentiation of the relative and absolute. The first was the influence of David Anghaght, the second was that of neo-platonic mysticism.

The cause of return. In the first phase of differentiation of God and the man, God is proclaimed the cause of everything, including the cause of the man's both existence and return; in the phase of identification, man is perceived as the cause of man's salvation, return. In the next phase of differentiation God is treated as an absolute cause while the man is a relative one. In the next stage of identification man is proclaimed as an absolute cause like God.

The absolute return. Through absolute words, God returns the man finitely and infinitely. The absolute word is an absolutely finite, concise and infinite word (*You seek my return to you, and do not grow weary* (Pr. 58, B), consequently God says and saves finitely and vice versa, he says and saves infinitely. This is also expressed in the issue of the duration of saving. Narekatsi stated that God did not need time for saving him, i.e. the man's return is timeless which, as it has been revealed, means the duration of absolutely finite and infinite time. And this is the very way the man's return is realized.

God saves man through the word directly and indirectly; God is an *unreachable distance, immediate closeness*, in this way he creates and returns everything.

The Son was proclaimed as the *mediator of our reconciliation* (Pr. 11, D) through whom the man was saved. The incarnate God was identified with the whole material diversity that was why in Prayer 28 such ideas were developed: *I have all earthly ills and thus can serve as an emissary* (B), *you are able to forgive all our sins, triumphing over all violence, fending off all the blows, ... submerge and destroy all sins and clear them away* (E). And he did not accidentally mention: *Let him who prepared this remedy for the salvation of our souls be made whole in your name, restore us to the light and we will deem ourselves blissful with him* (F).

Thus it turns out that the man was saved through the salvation of the incarnate God; all beings and vice versa, through the man's salvation, all were saved. So God saved the man absolutely indirectly, through all beings (the incarnate Word, Christ), as well as absolutely directly: *Do not hesitate, do not delay day by day* (Pr. 58, C); *Say the word, and I will be found spotless. Forget my wrongs, and I shall venture to emerge* (Pr. 42, B); *work a miracle upon me divinely* (Pr. 58, A)

God did not save the man necessarily, he saved him just humanely, due to his exceeding goodness; God cannot but be good, humane, consequently proceeding from its necessity he saved the man: *You, on the contrary, are not even capable of evil: You are good in your very essence* (Pr. 34, K).

The man can absolutely become god through his word and work. Through his absolutely short, infinite word man can be saved; he says "I have sinned" and regrets; *blessed is the phrase "I have sinned" that gives the heart a hope* (Pr. 27, C); confession wins over creation. And through absolutely infinite word, he gets to know God and is saved.

And the *Book of Lamentations* was such an infinite, all-inclusive word to God in favor of the man's salvation for Narekatsi. Of course, it should be mentioned that the absoluteness of the man's word was sublated by relativeness in the next phase.

The man absolutely separated his body from the soul through his word and joined God spiritually. Here Narekatsi's mysticism was manifested: he defamed body, earthly life, preached mortification of the body and passions for the soul to live eternally. In this case asceticism was radically and absolutely negative.

Meanwhile the man achieved absolute harmony, unity of his body and soul through his work and in this way became absolutely god. This viewpoint was a novelty for the whole Middle Ages. Narekatsi did not demand to mortify the body, suppress passions; on the contrary he demanded to comply with the body passions. In this case, asceticism was positive, with the ultimate purpose of eternal coexistence of the body and soul. The man became god finitely and infinitely through his work. Apparently, Narekatsi developed Origen's idea that souls fall down and then return to God again; if Origen thought that this process was only infinite, Narekatsi claimed the contrary, that the process was not only infinite but also finite; the process of falling down and rising was the process of creation and return.

The Logical Principles of the Return, Salvation

The first phase of differentiation

a) The corporeal, finite man, expanding, spreading and thickening, returns to incorporeal, eternal God. This is the moment of the opposition, differentiation of return and creation. If the creation was the corporal man's origination from the incorporeal God in the result of thinning, shrinkage, the return is its opposite process: by expanding, spreading, corrupting, thickening, the corporeal, finite, mortal man turns into incorporeal, eternal God.

It should be noted that having studied Narekatsi's philosophical system (Chaloyan, Khrlopyan) and indicated the influence of the Neo-Platonism on Narekatsi's philosophy, nobody has so far noticed the fact of the development of Neo-Platonism by the great Armenian philosopher; due to which he avoided being epigone and became the founder of an independent, unique philosophical system, teaching. Neo-Platonism consistently tried "to infer the gradation of all other beings existing in the world from the divine unity, as an ultimate basis for every kind of being, and mark the way back to the initial unity". That is to say, Neo-Platonism can be characterized by the following line $G \rightarrow N (M) \rightarrow G$. This expresses the moment of the initial opposition, differentiation of the man (nature) and God, creation and return in Narekatsi's work,

i.e. it was one of the aspects of Narekatsi's philosophical system, moreover it was an initial, source aspect; it was only the beginning of the development of his system, teaching...

This was the moment when there remained nothing except demanding the suppression of passions, "mortification" of the body; by thickening, spreading, clearing away as fog, the corporal man would turn into the incorporeal man: *melting the substance of stone with fire, with all the other elements of nature* (Pr. 79, B).

b) By shrinking, thinning the incorporeal man becomes corporeal.

Narekatsi emphasized the incorporeal man's transformation into the corporal man and vice versa. This process is repeated ($M \rightarrow M \rightarrow M$) *I am cleansed but am covered with soot. I am washed but am soiled just the same.* (Pr. 71, C). That is to say the incorporeal man's transformation into the corporal man is a return too and this process is the opposite process, the continuation of the corporeal man's transformation into the incorporeal man, and they comprise a cycle together: $M \rightarrow M \rightarrow M$ is an elaboration, change, a variant of the neo-platonic line $G \rightarrow N(M) \rightarrow G$, which is actually identical with the line $M \rightarrow G \rightarrow M$, corporeal \rightarrow incorporeal \rightarrow corporeal.

In the second stage of identification, incorporeal and corporeal man becomes a) incorporeal and corporeal man b) incorporeal and corporeal God. This stage is the dialectical sublation, partial concretization, development of the initial phase of differentiation. Firstly, it follows from the sameness of God and the man that the returning man is not only corporal but also incorporeal (consists of two beginnings, soul and body). Secondly, it follows from that sameness that the man returns, turns into not only God but also into himself: both God and the man as objects of reduction, as the ones, which the man turns into, are corporal and incorporeal. The most essential is the fact that Narekatsi deduced the idea that man returned not only to God but also to the man: *He does not ask to be among the immortals, who live in the light... among broken hearted and contrite* (Pr. 30, B). Here dominant is the poet Narekatsi's boundless humanism; his human dignity and conscience. (This is a vivid example of how sensitivity and emotions made the great thinker come to ideas contradicting the medieval traditions. Narekatsi was an exceedingly sensitive man and an astonishingly deep thinker). Certainly, this phase was sublated, developed in the next phases too. The return to the man and the return to God are identical in this stage as both God and the man are corporal and incorporeal. This is why, the man returning to himself, i.e. preserving the balance between his opposites, returns to God, becomes corporeal and incorporeal God.

You combined opposites in the make-up of man,

a little gravity, a little levity,

on the one hand coolness, on the other heat,
so that by keeping the opposites in balance,
we might be called just,
because of this faithful equality.

And however virtuous we might be judged
on this account, when transported upward,
we should bear in view that we have been made of humble clay
and accept the crown of tribulation. (Pr. 86, A)

Here Narekatsi suggested the healing of the soul and body (psychic and physical illnesses and pains), fortification, perfection of the soul and body: not to mortify the body and body passions but develop them moderately without damaging the soul, within the limits of the balance of the body and soul. The man returns, turns into a man in this way, which means return to the corporal and incorporeal man. To keep the soul and body in balance and unity means to be God as God is a unity of the soul and body and in general of all kinds of opposites. This idea is frequently hinted in the *Book of Lamentations*, even in the part cited above there is a hint of that idea: *by keeping the opposites in balance, we might be called just*. The epithet “just” is always used in relation to God; it is the symbol of God, the perfection, so that by “just” one can freely understand God. Prayer 46 says that the man is a balance, unity (whole) (also as a part, an opposite) of opposites and *in the living image of God, is completely condemned, my enslaved soul (C)*, so God is a true unity of opposites.

The man’s return means that man’s opposites harmoniously turn into God’s opposites and at the same time, it means that the man’s opposites harmoniously transmute into one another and into themselves:

The incorporeal becomes corporeal

The incorporeal becomes incorporeal

The corporal becomes corporeal

The corporeal becomes incorporeal

Or

Light becomes darkness

Light becomes light

Darkness becomes darkness

Darkness becomes light.

These inner transformations take place through shrinkage, thinning and expansion, thickening.

In the third phase, the return to the man and God is different because the man as corporal and incorporeal is different from God who is both corporal and incorporeal. In this phase, the man is corporeal and incorporeal relatively while God is absolutely. That is why the man's return to the man and God is different. In the second phase man and God were identical and the man's return to the man was not a transformation into something different from the man, while in this stage, the man's return is not only a return to himself but also to something different from him, to God.

- a) The relatively corporeal and incorporeal man returns to absolutely corporeal and incorporeal God.

The man as a unity of temporary, limited (finite), relative soul and body becomes God as a unity of eternal, limitless (infinite), absolute soul and body. This means that man's relatively corporal and incorporeal opposites turn into something different from themselves, into God's absolutely corporeal and incorporeal opposites:

relatively corporeal becomes absolutely corporeal

relatively incorporeal becomes absolutely incorporeal

relatively corporeal becomes absolutely incorporeal

relatively incorporeal becomes absolutely corporeal

or

the relative darkness becomes an absolute darkness

the relative light becomes an absolute light

the relative darkness becomes an absolute light

the relative light becomes an absolute darkness.

In this phase the man's becoming God is

- 1) on the one hand, an outer change (extensive) in the sense that the man turns into something outside him (RULING him), into God, consequently the man's opposites turn into God's opposites: a) the relatively corporeal and incorporeal, subduing all the relatively corporeals and incorporeals, becomes absolutely corporeal and incorporeal and b) submitting to all the others, it becomes absolutely corporal and incorporeal.
- 2) On the other hand, the man's becoming God is an inner change (intensive) in the sense that the man and God are relatively and absolutely corporeal and incorporeal. In this stage, their difference consists in the fact that the relative is dominant for one and for the other the absolute is. Consequently, the man's becoming God implies the change of the relationships between opposites, establishment of the absolute dominance instead of the relative one and submitting to the absolute corporal and incorporeal again in two ways: by expanding and thickening.

b) The man as absolutely corporeal and incorporeal returns to himself as such:

relatively corporeal becomes relatively corporeal

relatively corporeal becomes relatively incorporeal

relatively incorporeal becomes relatively corporeal

relatively incorporeal becomes relatively incorporeal

or

the relative darkness becomes a relative darkness

the relative darkness becomes a relative light

the relative light becomes a relative light

the relative light becomes a relative darkness.

These transformations into the relatively corporeal and incorporeal man are the outer aspect of the man's return in the sense that the man turns into something though identical with him, however into a man outside him, i.e. these transformations are not transformations of the man's opposites (the transformations of the relatively corporeal and incorporeal are the transformations of the corporeal man's opposites).

And only in the fourth phase a more or less complete sameness is achieved. The absolutely and relatively corporeal and incorporeal man becomes absolutely and relatively corporeal and incorporeal God and man.

The Advocate of Solidarity

(Gr. Narekatsi and the Georgian Reality)

The Armenian and Georgian peoples shared some common stages of a unique development of their spiritual cultures both during pre-Christian and Christian periods. These neighbor peoples accepted the progressive Christian ideology of the time and created national script and literature almost simultaneously... They simultaneously entered the period of Renaissance, having two genius minds, Grigor Narekatsi and Shota Rustaveli whose great creative deeds were so highly appraised by N. Marr: "The medieval romantic poem of Shota of Rustav in Georgia and Grigor Narekatsi's lyric in Armenia are the greatest monuments of the Caucasian literature".

Narekatsi and Rustaveli as great representatives of Renaissance had much in common in regard to their worldview. First of all, their philosophical-ideological background was common: both of them were the bearers of the Neo-Platonic ideology of Christianity (Renaissance). The result of its positive effect was the two great poets' humanism and free speaking. Even their creative orientations were common. As N. Marr noted, each of them turned to the rich spiritual treasury of his nation's past in his creative searching and had *the Habetian (Caucasian) base* as a source. An insightful person will surely notice traces of the Armenian and Georgian figurative linguo-mentality of the pagan period in both Narekatsi's and Rustaveli's works. For instance, the pagan worship of the sun had a deep influence on both Narekatsi's and Rustaveli's works.

The two giants of Renaissance were the pioneers of the new humanistic perception of the world and the new thinking. The vivid example of their humanism was the advancement and defense of the ideas of peoples' amity, interethnic solidarity and religious-doctrinal tolerance.

Gr. Narekatsi did not come into direct contact with the Georgian reality. He had never been in Georgia (Georgia is mentioned in his works only once; in the *History of the Cross of Aparan*). However, Narekatsi as a great representative of the Armenian of Renaissance, as a celebrated social-religious figure already in his time, had a special attitude towards the issues of the Armenian-Chalcedonian, particularly Armenian-Georgian religious-political relationships of the 10th century. And this special attitude, position later developed into a powerful thought, ideological mainstream which played a decisive role in the further deepening of the Armenian-Georgian relationships, collaboration of the two neighbor peoples and strengthening of solidarity between them.

And naturally, two neighbour peoples who were tied with thousands of bonds, who had existed thousands of years relying on each other could not sacrifice all that was of vital importance, to private religious discords and build their future relationships on them. That was why already in the period of early Renaissance under the influence of the flourishing of humanistic ideas there emerged the idea of religious-doctrinal tolerance and interethnic solidarity as a vital, historical necessity. The founder of that process in Armenia was Grigor Narekatsi.

Gr. Narekatsi was the younger son of the tenth-century Armenian prominent author and reformer Khosrov Andzevatsi. Since childhood, he and his elder brother Hovhannes had been educated in the famous monastery of Narek under the tutelage of his uncle Anania Narekatsi. That famous medieval cultural-elucidating and scientific-educational monastery was one of the ideological centers of the Armenian Reformation.

Reformation had two wings, mainstreams in Armenia. One, the most revolutionary wing was the Tondrakian Movement, the other was the movement of the proponents of moderate reformations. Grigor's father Khosrov, the bishop of the province of Andzev, was a representative of the second stream. He sought to introduce some innovations and improvements into the Armenian Church. Firstly, he tried to simplify the hierarchy of church orders, to reduce the nine orders of clergy to three. Secondly, he suggested enlivening the church rituals to make them more earthly and effective. Thirdly, he was against the deepening of the feudal exploitation on the part of the church, and sluggish and carnal religious leaders' greediness. He even dared to act against the feudal bases of the church, viz. Khosrov Andzevatsi's refusal to give "presents" to the Catholicos. The "present" was in fact something like an obligatory tax. Bishop Khosrov refused

to pay such taxes saying: “Who’s made me the Catholicos’ tax-payer?” And as Kirakos Gandzaketsi told, he justified his words in the following way: “The bishop needn’t give presents to the Catholicos as they say he is not higher, the difference is only in titles”. As we see, by suggesting the reduction of the number of church orders, Khosrov Andzevatsi pursued one more goal, which was the simplifying of the hierarchic structure of the church, as a feudal institution, thereby limiting its chances of exploitation. The latter was the main reason of serf peasants' revolt against the church. Fourthly, one of the main axes of Khosrov Andzevatsi's comprehensive program of church reformations was the normalization of the escalated relationships among the neighbor Christian peoples and their churches, establishment of amity and collaboration, borrowing some useful and positive innovations from them.

For his innovations, Khosrov Andzevatsi was accused of being a tsayt, i.e. one who deviates from the Armenian official faith, a Chalcedonian. He himself wrote the following in this concern: “If one of the Armenians adopts the canons of other nations, considering them true, he will be considered a tsayt, an apostate. He will be mocked, persecuted and threatened with death”.

Though Khosrov Andzevatsi was persecuted and anathematized by the Catholicos, he had a deep influence on the complicated process of the ideological searches of the time. The spiritual-cultural atmosphere of the Narek monastery was filled with new ideas. Andzevatsi's son, Grigor Narekatsi, the genius poet and philosopher, was brought up and educated in this atmosphere. Being faithful to his father's ideas, he continued his work, for which the conservative clergy persecuted and accused him of being a tsayt.

Not being a Chalcedonian, Grigor Narekatsi supported the principle of religious tolerance in inter-ecclesiastical relationships. The vivid evidence of this is FIRST OF ALL the thing that Narekatsi, as a representative of the Armenain Renaissance, was full of ideas of universal salvation and happiness. According to him, the whole mankind was a sailboat tossing about on the sea of the mankind's existence, was subject to countless hardships; the great humanist himself was in search of ways to the harbor of happiness, justice, peace for that sailboat. This was the main idea of Narekatsi's poem, *Book of Lamentations*. The poet-humanist, occupied with such honest motives, could not be a supporter of national, doctrinal discrimination...

And it is not accidental that his *Book of Lamentations* is directed to the whole mankind, to all Christian nations without exception, no matter Dyophysite or Monophysite:

A new book of psalms sings with urgency through me,

for all thinking people the world over,

expressing all human passions

and serving with its images

for the newborn who have just arrived,

for the adults whose days are ripe and numbered (Pr. 3, B)

The second argument: information of special value has come down to us through Haysmavurk (Menology), stating that Narekatsi made attempts to establish union between the neighboring churches, that was why he was accused of being a tsayt. Moreover, he was tried but was justified due to a "miracle". Narekatsi lived in such a period that even a slight goodwill, sympathy towards Byzantine or Georgian reality was viewed as a betrayal and heresy and became a reason for persecutions and pursuits. Haysmavurk testifies that our genius poet was pursued on this reason too.

Thirdly, the twelve-century Armenian Catholicos Nerses Lambronatsi considered that Grigor Narekatsi shared Vahan Catholicos's views. Vahan was elected the Armenian Catholicos in 968, after Anania Mokatsi. The Armenian celebrated historian Stephanos Orbelyan told the following about Vahan: "A year after being elected Catholicos, he began to bring icons from Georgia and put them on the altar. He ordered to do the same in all the churches, to decorate altars with icons like the Greeks and not to say mass without icons. That was why everyone thought that he had concluded an alliance with the Greeks and wanted to bring their sect into our church. People complained of him to the king. And the king ordered to convene a council in the city of Ani to clear up the matter. Knowing it, Vahan did not attend the council, instead he went to the province of Vaspurakan to king Gagik's son and convinced him that he was slandered by envious people"⁸².

As we see, the only "guilt" of Vahan Syunetsi, for which he was accused and persecuted as belonging to the Georgian church, was the importation of icons from Georgia. The question of icons was one of the important questions of the Armenian-Chalcedonian disputes. Thus, Yepimos Atonetsi, Georgian ecclesiastical figure of 10th-11th centuries, told the following in his book *The Heretic Armenians*: "We learned that holy and honorable icons are not accepted in Armenia, neither are they (icons) worshiped...". The usage of icons in the Armenian religious rituals was very limited and the Tondrakians refused to worship icons at all. Vahan Syunetsi, as

⁸² Stephanos Orbelyan, History of Syuniq, Yerevan, "Sovetakan Grogh", 1986, p. 250.

a proponent of moderate reformations, tried to enlarge the usage of icons in church rituals for the purpose of enlivening them and making them more influential and effectual. Narekatsi, as Catholicos Vahan's co-thinker, spoke of the importance of icons in Prayer 76 of his *Book of Lamentations* and emphasized that portraying the Mother of God should not be regarded as impious:

*If one were to consider her the image of the Mother
of God, it would not be impious.*

*Like the sign of the cross of salvation with amazing
powers and handiwork, it performs miracles.*

*The terrifying tribunal of the last judgment
is established there visibly.*

Through her, the babbling mouths of immoral heretics are silenced. (Pr. 75, L)

One more fact confirms the ideological closeness of both Vahan and Grigor Narekatsi and Vahan and other clergymen of the monastery of Narek. Catholicos Vahan's visit to Vaspurakan accounts for the growing interest towards the Georgian reality on the part of the clergy of the monastery of Narek. The vivid evidence of this is the fact that the historian Ukhtanes wrote his *History of the Severance of the Georgians from the Armenians* due to the undertaking and admonishment of the head of the monastery of Narek.

The Armenologist Peeters had doubts as to why Anania Narekatsi would order Ukhtanes to write the history when he could freely draw information about the partition of the Armenian and Georgian churches from the collection of *Girk Tghtots* (Book of Letters). Besides the clergy of the monastery of Narek had a deep respect towards Hellenistic literature and culture, they were progressive thinkers; consequently they could not undertake the writing of a work of an ardent anti-Chalcedonian nature. It is logical to think that the order of the monastery of Narek had some concealed purpose. Anania and Grigor Narekatsis had once been accused of being Catholicos Vahan's intimate friends and co-thinkers, of sympathizing with the Georgian church and reality. And by undertaking the writing of the *History of the Severance of the Georgians from the Armenians*, the figures of the monastery of Narek wanted to secure themselves from accusations.

Relying on the information given by Haysmavurk and Nerses Lambronatsi, the eighteenth-century historian Mikayel Chamchyan wrote: "...he was considered a schismatic because he

wanted to unite the Armenians around the Greek and Georgian churches that were Chalcedonian, and because he had borrowed some innovations from them”. M. Chamchyan perceived the “unity” in another way, presenting the desired as reality. According to him, Narekatsi had really adopted Chalcedonian doctrine: “Now it is known that Catholicoses Ezr and Vahan had accepted the holy Council of Chalcedon and preached its canons. Agreeing with them, Narekatsi accepted that Council too and tried to unite with them”. However, the truth is that not being a Dyophysite, Narekatsi wanted to reconcile the neighboring Christian churches.

The sober-minded Armenian Monophysite reformers clearly saw and realized that religious disputes grew into political violence, interethnic clashes, antagonisms and weakened the neighbor Christian peoples, harmed their spiritual culture, economic and political unity, and this all was fraught with a great tragedy under the conditions of the common external threat. Only this can explain Khosrov Andzevatsi’s, Catholicos Vahan’s, Grigor Narekatsi’s aspiration and attempts to ease the Armenian-Chalcedonian escalated relations and end the interethnic hostility and clashes arising on the basis of religious-doctrinal discrimination.

Now let us view how Narekatsi really understood the issue of “Christ’s nature”. It should be noted that Narekatsi’s position in the Armenian-Chalcedonian debate was assessed from two radical points of view:

- a) Some people considered him Chalcedonian, proponent of the Dyophysite principle;
- b) Others considered him an ardent anti-Chalcedonian.

The truth is that being a proponent of the Monophysite principle, he did not confine himself only to it; he accepted the sameness and difference of the principles of Monophytism and Dyophysitism, monism and dualism in a chain of negations.

The main question of philosophy, in the form of God and man (=nature) interrelation, had been raised both before the Christian ideology and during its domination. Even the medieval disputes on Christ’s nature must be viewed as a manifestation of the development of the human thought on the main problem of philosophy, development of that question in the frames of theology.

Owing to his ecclesiastical-doctrinal education in the monastery of Narek, Narekatsi was well aware of the debates on Monophysitism and Dyophysitism, which lasted several centuries. Besides, he witnessed the Armenian-Chalcedonian debate, particularly the ongoing debates between the Armenian and Georgian Churches, growing hotter. So, it is interesting to find out Narekatsi’s theoretical approach to this question, especially as he did not view it as a narrow religious-doctrinal superficial problem; he had concentrated his attention on the essential point of

the problem. That is why we do not see a one-sided support of the official point of view of the Armenian Church by him.

The principle of Monophysitism, “Christ is only and only God”, was the main but an initial judgment for Narekatsi. Comparing that judgment with the judgment “God is everything”, Narekatsi drew the following conclusion: if Christ, the Son God, as such, is everything, he is also the man. Today it is not a secret that contradicting the medieval dogmatism in his *Book of Lamentations*, the great humanist sought to prove that not only God was Man, but also the Man could become God. In this way, Narekatsi deduced the principle of Dyophysitism from the principle of Monophysitism; Christ is God but he is also a Man.

The concepts “God” and “Man” underwent a complex process of development in Narekatsi’s *Book of Lamentations*. First, he differentiated those two concepts; God and the man are different, God (Christ) is God and the man is man. Then this judgment was negated, sublated by the identification of those concepts: Christ is God and man; accordingly, the man is a man and simultaneously is God. However, this judgment was not a final truth either, and sameness was negated by a judgment of a new level. Christ is God and man to the extent of his possibilities, divinely, i.e. absolutely, while the Man is Man and God to the extent of his possibilities, i.e. relatively.

Those judgments of the phase of differentiation came from the fifth-century philosopher David Anahaght who was the first in the Armenian reality to try to ground the principle of Monophysitism. This “grounding” remained untouched till Grigor Narekatsi. The latter not only discovered the mechanism of David Anahaght’s grounding of that principle and the logical process of deduction but also elaborated that thought through negation. Narekatsi considered that the second differentiation of the concepts “God” and “Man” was not a final truth either and should be negated by a new, a higher-level sameness. This time God’s and the man’s potentials, “extents” were identified. Christ is God and man not only to the extent of his possibilities but also to the extent of the man’s possibilities (relatively). And the man is God and man not only to the extent of human possibilities but also divinely, absolutely. In this phase, Narekatsi did not demand of God to ease the man’s miserable, poor existence but to work miracles divinely: *I turn to you for forgiveness not on the meager human scale, but with the full undiminishing measure of loving kindness shown toward us by our Savior Jesus Christ* (Pr. 18, A); *I pray not only for his rewards but also for himself, the essence of life, guarantor of giving and taking of breath who there is no movement, no progress without* (Pr. 12, B).

The judgments of this phase of identification were not final truths for Narekatsi, either. They were negated too. And in this way, through the upward steps of the negations of sameness and difference the medieval great thinker went deep into the eternal problems of the eternal and temporary, infinite and finite, existence and non-existence, displaying great abilities of dialectical thinking...

Thus thinking freely, Narekatsi treated none of the principles of Monophysitism and Dyophysitism as absolute truth though the principle of Monophysitism was primary for him. This special theoretical approach of his was conditioned by the general position of moderate reformers.

Narekatsi's objective, realistic position towards the Armenian-Georgian inter-ecclesiastical relationships is a case of extraordinary importance. As history proves, the strengthening of unity and collaboration of two peoples on the basis of historical and economic, spiritual and cultural generality has always been the token of the existence and stable development of each of them. Only such great and sensible thinkers as Grigor Narekatsi and the figures of the Armenian Reformation who ranked national interests higher than private ecclesiastical ones, were able to display such an approach in the intricate, escalated religious-doctrinal conditions. Narekatsi's position was a great heroic deed. This fact is a prominent phenomenon of the history of literary-cultural interrelations of our two peoples. It should be written with golden letters in the history of the two peoples.

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Samvel Poghosyan

My Narekatsi

Translated by Ani Toroyan

Edited by Alina Mirzoyan

