

Samvel Poghosyan

My Narekatsi

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

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Poghosyn Samvel

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Samvel Poghosyan's book "My Narekatsi" is devoted to 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 the 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 (the bondage of a great number of peasants in the result of the intensification of feudal exploitation, the strengthening of the structure of pressure apparatuses of secular and religious authorities, economic and military strengthening, flourishing of the cities which were great centers of feudal formations—crafts and trades were developed), on the other hand, the resistance of the exploited strengthened too, class struggle escalated.

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

they were approached from different points of view and with different purposes by the representatives of the rivaling camps of that ideological struggle. 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.

But there was something common that united the members of that struggle: an active interest towards the ancient, especially towards Hellenistic culture and philosophy and the ideological sources of Christian theology.

From the 10th century on, “the Armenian science and philosophy show a growing interest towards 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 seems 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. For Medieval Armenia Grigor Narekatsi is the innovator of the Armenian literary and social-philosophical thought”¹.

As a great thinker, Narekatsi was the true son of his era, and his whole ideology is conditioned by national and social problems put forward by the Early Renaissance itself. These concrete problems, in a generalized form, are 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. It was this trend that enabled clergymen to accuse the great humanist of adhering to the Tondrakian movement. It may seem that, by thinking that national and social liberation consists in man’s and man-kind’s perfection, 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), i.e. he thought that only by an individuals’ education, perfection, “salvation” and “return” can the perfection of a society and even the whole universe be achieved.

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

But the point is that Narekatsi simultaneously put forward the problem of reaching an individual's perfection through the perfection of society 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's development in the 10th century, though he viewed society as unity of opposites and for the unity, even sameness and "balance" of which 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, 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 became the expresser 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 opposite positions such as devotion and atheism, obedience and revolt and others are not alien 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.

him. He is not indifferent to both man's good and bad manifestations. He attributes to himself everything that refers to man and is human and does this 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" (Grigor Narekatsi's main work *Book of Lamentations* was called *Narek* by people) 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 became the expressers of the public concern to seek ways for national and social liberation as well as the expressers of 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. But 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. It is this that 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 *Narek* is equal to a folk epic for the Armenians and is considered as a visiting-card of the Armenian people, like Rustaveli's *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* for Georgians, *Narty Epic* for Caucasian highlanders.

Grikor Narekatsi's literary heritage, rich in content, has been studied and is studied in many aspects: literary-critical (in relation to 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, it is Narekatsi studies which, however, has unsolved problems, particularly in the field of Narekatsi's philosophical views. The works done in this field are classified into two periods: in the studies of the first period (mostly interpretations) Narekatsi's ideology was mainly elucidated and evaluated from religious-dogmatic standpoints (G. Avetiqlan, 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 mostly the main point, nature of his worldview. The elucidation of this problem has undergone a considerable development. At first Narekatsi's worldview was

³ Narekatsi called so his book.

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 revealed and his philosophical worldview was qualified as pantheism (H. Gabrielyan, M. Mkryan). Chaloyan's contribution to the revelation of the nature of the *Narek* is great. In his well-known article devoted to Narekatsi, he considers Narekatsi's philosophy as pantheistic but "it is not only a pantheistic philosophy but also an indication to Neoplatonic 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 is pantheism and Neoplatonism is only "indicated" as a source of pantheism. Today it is obvious that Narekatsi's worldview is Neoplatonic, but the question is not settled yet. Narekatsi is a representative of Neoplatonism in the period of the Renaissance; Neoplatonic ideas were developed by him to a certain degree. It is not a mere imitation or literal revival of Hellenistic and Christian Neoplatonism but a definite, a higher-level development with almost the same tendencies which are seen in the works of Nicolas of Cusa. As to pantheism, it is not the main essence of Narekatsi's worldview and his philosophical system, it is only an aspect, an element of that system, and the whole system is structured not on the basis of pantheism but on the basis of Neoplatonism and the traditions of the Corpus Areopagiticum, while the idea of pantheism is indicated as one of the conclusions of Neoplatonic philosophy.

* * *

Gr. Narekatsi's literary heritage 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 recognition. It is this that expresses not only the historically timeless value of Narekatsi's philosophy but, which is still more important, 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 at last 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 possible by man.

Though the scientific, philosophical linguomentality of his times was developed on the basis of David Anahaght's (David the Invincible's) 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") with the help of the language of science, and Narekatsi tries to fulfill his intention with the help of the possibilities of poetry and figurative linguomentality. He has done this 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 readers' minds but also hearts. In the *Narek*, great attention is paid to the unity and transmutation of thought and emotion: a bright thought must be also emotional. The most important fact for the author is probably the figurative linguomentality: the possibility of multiple interpretations of linguistic units and image-symbols enables 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 on the basis of 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. Armenian Reformation and the School of Narek

As it has already been mentioned in the introduction, the 10th century saw momentous changes in the Armenian homeland. 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 reformations 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 coincides only with one struggling wing of the European Reformation—the heretical, plebeian-peasant wing headed by Thomas Munster and others; on the other hand, Tondrakian movement is identified with the whole Reformation. But like the European (German) Reformation, comprising not only the plebeian-peasant movement led by Thomas Munzer, the Tondrakian movement is only one of the manifestations of the Armenian Reformation. In the Armenian reality, besides Tondrakians, the Reformation is presented by a movement headed by the supporters of moderate reformations and innovations; with its main problems, that movement almost resembles Lutheranism. Though the "moderates" were identified with Tondrakians and equally perused and persecuted by the clerical-feudal conservatives who were against any, even the slightest innovation, the "moderates" were quite different from Tondrakians. They did not support 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 the exploitation their influence on people weakened, that people got out of feudal and clerical control and obedience, and also realizing how much that tendency could damage the national and spiritual-cultural unity of the Armenian people under the conditions of the absence of a united statehood, the "moderates"

suggested that the church should make some reformations. In order to democratize the church, they tried to simplify the clerical-feudal hierarchy (and 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 "though 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, as the bishop of the province of Andzevatsik. Khosrov undertakes to introduce some innovations into the church. At first the Catholicos does not pay attention to these actions. But then when the bishop of Andzevatsik goes too far with his innovations he is criticized by the Catholicos, persecuted and pursued.

Fortunately, Catholicos Anania Mokatsi's epistles have survived and were published in the journal *Ararat* in 1897 due to the famous philologist Galust Ter-Mkrtchyan's efforts. One can learn from these letters about Khosrov Andzevatsi's innovations and why the Catholicos anathematized him. One of the letters addressed to the bishop Khosrov Andzevatsi is entitled so: "The reason of Lord Anania Mokatsi's anathematizing Bishop Khosrov Andzevatsi". Anania Mokatsi writes in that letter: "In the year 954, Bishop Khosrov Andzevatsi, who was a modest and wise elderly man, suddenly driven by an evil force, without any reason, began to speak deviously, distorting words. For instance, he began to pronounce *kyur' ake* instead of *kiraki* (Sunday), *Er' usaghem* instead of *Erusaghem* and lots of other words. Then he made senseless demands, e.g. to shave children's head until they are grown up, that is why he was called cutter. Another demand was to let hair and beard grow and become longer because of which he was called a child. Then he introduced into the church other nonsense, e.g. referring to cross he spoke ill of it, 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.

What is interesting is 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 earned the ire of the Catholicos: "But if you emphasize three church

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

⁵ "Ararat", 1897, pp. 276-277.

orders, excluding others, where did you get such ideas? Even Dionysius whom you trust so much enumerates seven orders and writes an accusation against the subdeacon Demophilos, while you mention only three orders and not more. And now you are more respected as those holding lower posts than you, and God's servants, priests, high priests, their disciples became your advisors. If one of them makes a mistake and deviates from the system, the orders will be ruined, 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 in 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. In this way clergymen would be less occupied with their own concerns, would be closer to people and be better able to strengthen 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 writes: "I know you want to end the religious power, which you cannot do. Then why are you a destroyer of these orders and not their establisher?"⁷

The Catholicos was angry with him most of all 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. We learn from the Catholicos's letters that Khosrov refused to pay such tributes saying: "Who made me Catholicos's tax-payer?" And as Kirakos Gandzaketsi tells, he tried to justify it in the following way: "There is no need for a bishop to give presents to the Catholicos as they say he is not higher, the difference is only in titles"⁸.

Anania Mokatsi views 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 one is conferred from a reader to the degree of deacon, the other from a deacon to priest, consequently there are still degrees to be promoted. Then priesthood is followed by episcopacy, after which there is no degree, just superiority in regard to throne. It is not called promotion from episcopacy to the degree of patriarch, i.e. there is no more

⁶ Ibid., pp. 286-288.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 277-280.

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

title: one throne and one honor to both a bishop and a patriarch. And the second, patriarch, is just a name, not a double honor”⁹.

Concealing the real social aspect of the issue, the Catholicos accuses 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 unshattered borderlines between clergymen, i.e. each of them becomes a separate priest and house (acts independently from others), hence an evil for the society”. The angry Catholicos continues: “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 Andzevati not to revolt, not to refuse 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 too 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. But he himself writes the following in this concern: “If one of the Armenians adopts the canons of other nations, considering them true, he will be considered as 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 occur such qualitative changes in the life of the Armenian people that the unity of these changes comprises a very remarkable period in the development of Armenian culture, and this period is rightfully called “Armenian Renaissance”¹¹.

The ripened conflicts of reality, being reflected in the spiritual culture, cause an acute ideological struggle. In the sphere of culture, in parallel with the strengthening of the oppressive influence of Christian ideology "from above", the reaction of secular thinking and the elements of the secular culture strengthened "from below" 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 dimensions of that ideological struggle. The time required to reconsider the dominant ideas (though the reactionary circles of the clergy supported

⁹ “Ararat”, 1897, p. 277.

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

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

the unquestionability of Christian dogmas and were against their free interpretation) but they were approached differently and with different purposes by the representatives of the two (rivalry) currents of the Reformation. One of the parties sought to reconsider that ideology in order to improve it, the other party to criticize it strictly, 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 towards the past, particularly towards the Hellenistic culture and philosophy. From the 10th century on, “the Armenian science and philosophy show a growing interest towards 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 two prominent representatives of the 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 reach the intensification of their influence. Due to Anania Narekatsi’s creative innovation, such ecclesiastical genres as sermon, ode and admonition undergo a new qualitative development.

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

In Armenian literature Anania Narekatsi is presented as a philosopher, musician, poet and rhetorician. He is one of the highly merited persons of the Armenian medieval culture. As a writer-innovator he pays more attention to man’s inner ritual, inner prayer, inner monologue which serve to a man’s inner purification. He develops 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. This creative approach is developed in Grigor Narekatsi’s mystic poem *Book of Lamentations*.

The mysticism and ascetics preached by Anania and Grigor Narekatsis 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, *Argument Against Tondrakians and Other Sectarians* in which he criticized Tondrakians’ (the struggling wing of Armenian Reformation) ideology and activity, viewing them as unacceptable radicalism. But this did not help the author to avoid accusations either because at the end of his life he himself had doubts that he adhered to that sect and on the verge of his death wrote the *Letter of Confession* by the Catholicos’s order. Prof. M. Mkryan writes 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 spread of Tondrakians’ struggle). Later Grigor Narekatsi was treated in the same way too”¹⁵.

Grigor Narekatsi is the most prominent figure of the scientific-educational and cultural-enlightening center of Narek. The genius poet and thinker became a great innovator of the 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. He was venerated as a great philosopher and scientist, poet, rhetorician and musician already by his contemporaries. 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 is conditioned by Khosrov Andzevatsi’s and Anania Narekatsi’s prolific activity and creative, scientific-pedagogical innovations. Grigor Narekatsi was educated and formed in this atmosphere. He became his father’s and his teacher’s heir and continued their work.

¹⁴ International conference of 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 Narekatsi's trail

Little is known about Grigor Narekatsi's life and work. It is known that he is Khosrov Andzevatsi's son; from childhood he was 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; Vaspurakan's king Gurgen offered him to write a commentary on *Song of Songs*. Grigor Narekatsi wrote speeches, coda-chants, lays but his masterpiece is 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, 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 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 wanted to scold them for senselessness, suggesting that they should dine before going. He ordered to cook two pigeons and put them on the table. It was Friday. Being more tempted by it, they said: "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, grew wings and flew in the presence of everyone. Seeing that, they were surprised, 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 Second Illuminator¹⁷ and Wonderworker¹⁸.

Prof. M. Mkryan rightfully marks that this miracle and many other miracles, told in folk legends and epic songs about Narekatsi, prove that it is a historical truth, 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 himself a one and like his teacher he wrote against that movement. But the influence of many

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

¹⁸ Haysmavurk, 1706, p. 16.

ideas of that movement on Narekatsi's worldview is obvious. The poet does not deny it himself; in Prayer 75 of his *Book of Lamentations* he writes that he used to be fascinated with the evil ideas of that heresy too. Practically Narekatsi was really against the Tondrakians' "extremisms" as he was educated at the Narek School and was a representative of the current of moderate reformations. He was against destroying churches and monasteries; as *Haysmavurk* (Menology) testifies, he tried to establish 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, again nearer to them in order to strengthen their faith which was already weak. By the way, the tenth-century historian Ukhtanes was concerned with that issue too, he was deeply influenced by the Narek School. Wasn't it this that 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, too, was accused of being a tsayt, i.e. Chalcedonian, Orthodox, 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 as a tsayt, a schismatic, an apostate. He will be mocked, persecuted and threatened with death".

The prominent historian Mikayel Chamchian says 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 Chalcedonians, and because he borrowed some innovations from them"¹⁹. One of those innovations which the "Moderates" wanted to borrow from the neighboring Orthodox churches was the usage of icons. Orbelyan writes 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 mass without icons. That is 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 matter. Knowing it, Vahan did not attend the council, instead he went to the

¹⁹ M. Chamchian, *Hayots Patmutyun* (Armenian History), volume 2, p. 1023. M. Chamchian perceives that "unity" in another way, presenting the desired as reality. However, the truth is that not being a Chalcedonian Narekatsi wanted to establish reconciliation among the neighboring Christian churches.

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 speaks of the importance of icons and marks that portraying the Mother of God is 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 it is seen from this extract, Narekatsi gives reasons for the necessity of icons, in contrast to 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 position 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 strife and attempts 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 their special attitude to the neighboring Dyophysite churches and peoples a new mentality, a new

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*; other extracts from poems, with the exception of one, are translated by the translator of this book.

idea was formed in the medieval reality, the idea of religious tolerance and solidarity among nations. (As it is seen 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, 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. Only this can explain 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 even was 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 is why it is quite possible that the conservative clergy might 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 about 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* corresponds to the truth. We have no reason not to believe that there was a trial, that bishops and lords assembled to try Narekatsi. It is beyond doubt that this information is true because though the fact of high-ranking clergymen's and official's assembling for trying Narekatsi was in itself undesirable for

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

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

the official church (even an attempt of trying a saint did not do credit to churchmen) but anyway it is explicitly told in *Haysmavurk*. Why? Because the way of overcoming that unpleasant deadlock was 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 accepts the fact of the trial too; he even concretizes the place and the date of the council: “Seeing the Armenians’ disastrous partition 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 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 has diminished and he has 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 would 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 states that the trial took place in Ani in 987 (he marks the year 436 of Armenian chronology in the margin). Maybe this is the reason that the concrete information provided by M. Chamchian has not been given its true value in Philology and is not 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’s persecutions, the Armenian-Chalcedonian relations became comparatively peaceful. But in 986 there started a new wave of violence against the Armenian Monophysites. Interesting facts are told about it by the Armenian prominent historian Asoghik: “Both abbesses and the metropolitan

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

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

of Sebastia began to oppress 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. The senior 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 the same metropolitan, non-prominent priests Sion and Hovhanness, the two bishops of Sebastia (Sivas) and Larisso respectively, accepted the Chalcedonian creed. Being left out of the Armenian congregation, they were then refused by the Armenians of Sebastia too till King Basil's arrival in the Eastern Armenia. Then that metropolitan and other metropolitans began to write urgent letters to the Armenian Catholicos Lord Khachik, and the above mentioned Vardapets answered them courageously²⁷. Matteos Urhayetsi (Mathew of Edessa), an eleventh-century historian, writes 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 in 987 in Ani or Argina, Catholicos Khachik Arsharuni's residence, a council was called to discuss the issues of the mentioned events and the measures to take to strengthen the Armenian Church. It can be inferred from Urhayetsi's expression "the whole audience liked his letter" that Samvel Kamrjadzoretsi's response letter to the Byzantine bishop was discussed at that council too. It is quite possible that it was the very council to which Grigor Narekatsi, who was accused of being a "tsayt", had to go, the purpose of his going being 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 an 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 is impudent, a 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 would not have the immortal monument *Book of Lamentations*, the creative foundations of which the poet had

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

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

already laid at the time. Consequently, Narekatsi would be removed from the church and, in general, would come out of the social-political arena; 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 Tondrakians. He had a task to strengthen the shaken foundations of the Armenian Church and ease the Armenian-Chalcedonian relationships. He had to do a lot for that goal. He did not have another alternative anyway. The great thinker took that step, knowing that other ways would prove to be in vain. It would be naive to try to persuade church leaders once more in the great necessity of reformations 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* denies 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 repeats the legend in *Haysmavurk* that Narekatsi avoided the trial by a miracle.

3. How did Gr. Narekatsi justify himself?

It is clear that Narekatsi would not appear before the court empty-handed. He might have taken with him a work confirming his orthodoxy. 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 again come to orthodoxy as Anania Narekatsi had to write his *Confession Letter* on the verge of his 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 in the end of the 19th century. Narekatsi wrote his well-known letter to the head of the monastery of Kchav because of 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.

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

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 sound fact. It is less 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 it would hardly survive) somehow appeared at the Catholicate where it was included in the collection of *Girk Tghtos*? Isn't it possible that the author, Grigor, himself took 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, *A Study of the Manichaeon-Paulician-Tondrakian sect and Gr. Narekatsi's epistle*. Sargsyan writes the following about the real motive of writing the letter: "It should be noted that in the year 987 because of the sect of the hypocrite Tondrakians even the purest of abbots were accused of being Tondrakians' co-thinkers. Among these was also Saint Grigor whom enemies considered as a tsayt, i.e. apostate. A council with 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 know about it he had to write letters to different people, in which, however, he did not write his creed"³⁰. B. Sargsyan relates the writing of the epistle to the council convened to try Narekatsi; according to him (anyhow he himself hints at it), Narekatsi wrote his epistle not because he was much concerned with the fact that the clergymen of the 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. (The thing, that the real purpose of writing the letter was this, is obvious from the fact that the clergymen of the Kchav monastery are accused of being Tondrakians by someone who himself has been accused of the same thing).

What is striking is 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 assaults the clergymen of the Kchav monastery, accusing them of being Tondrakians and even writing the details of the ideology of that movement, he anathematizes and swears at 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

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 106-107.

writings and considers our Lord Anania's amazing objection-letter as a filthy talk", B. Sargsyan notes: "It is obvious from Grigor's words that the abbot of the monastery of Kchav had spoken or acted against Anania Narekatsi and on the one hand, had come to an agreement with Tondrakians, 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 the Kchav monastery really wanted to disseminate the Tondrakian sect in his congregation"³¹.

There is no doubt about the opposition of these two monasteries. It is quite possible that the clergy of the Kchav monastery accused Anania Narekatsi of being not sincere enough in his well-known writing against Tondrakians which gave the Catholicos an opportunity to make the dying Anania Narekatsi write his *Confession Letter*. Moreover, it is possible that after Anania Narekatsi's death the assaults and rumors of the clergymen of Kchav were directed against Grigor Narekatsi. Maybe it was the clergy of Kchav that spoke ill of the great poet to the Catholicos.

Under the conditions of an uncompromising ideological struggle, persecutions and pressures, one has to use one's opponent's weapon against him. Taking the chance that a certain Mushegh, who probably preached some of the ideas of the Tondrakian movement, lived in the Kchav monastery for some time, Narekatsi wrote his epistle addressed to the clergy of Kchav in a way as if he is 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; Narekatsi just took the revenge on them. And if the clergymen of Kchav justified themselves, proved their innocence, Narekatsi would justify himself with the fact that he had heard such kind of news, he just had suspicions and that is why had offered the abbot of the monastery of Kchav to anathematize Tondrakians too and write against them. Thus the question would be clarified and the both sides satisfied.

Narekatsi's epistle was differently assessed in Armenian studies. Some of the investigators even consider it as 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 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 is the reason of his special position towards the Tondrakians (members of the most revolutionary movement) on the one hand, and towards

³¹ Ibid., p. 108.

conservatives, on the other hand. And anyway, we should not forget that Narekatsi was the great figure and ideologist of the Armenian Reformation. Thus, though he did not like Tondrakians much but was closer to them than to conservatives.

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

Grigor Narekatsi's letter against the clergy of the Kchav monastery was a kind of "practical" evidence of its author's innocence. It could attest that its author had acted against sectarians, and the he more attacks than protects himself in that letter. B. Sargsayan has rightly marked that the author does not write about his faith, as 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 had 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 an entire work in which Narekatsi wrote 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 Tondrakians but also against Dyophysites. It is obvious from the fact that one of the citations from famous Vardapets in Vardan Aygektsi's collection of *Armat Havatoy* (Roots of Faith) is 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 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 has ever written them he has composed them independently from his poem, for other purposes, however for certain reasons these Prayers and parts were mixed with the text of the poem by later scribes”. A valuable study of manuscripts, conducted by P. Khachatryan and A. Ghazinyan recently, enables us to leave out doubts and to say with certainty that Grigor and no one else is the author of these Prayers, and they were initially in the *Book of Lamentations*³³. In this concern, the bibliographers write: “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’s creative help but copying and editorial help. Narekatsi does not give a hint that he is not the author of these Prayers”³⁴.

Accepting that initially these disputable Prayers comprised 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 these prayers. M. Kheranyan writes: “Prayers 75, 92, 93 wholly, as well as individual parts in Prayers 33, 34 and 36 are of only doctrinal and religious-philosophical character, and these Prayers, being stylistically and spiritually different from the whole poem, in my opinion, can hardly belong to the genius poet’s pen”³⁵. But the studies of manuscripts give no reason to doubt that Narekatsi is not the author of these prayers.

P. Khachatryan and A. Ghazinyan try 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 reason to take these Prayers out of the *Book of Lamentations*,

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 Mkrtych Kheranyan, Yerevan, 1960, p. 34.

moreover to consider them as not belonging to Narekatsi's pen. These Prayers make Narekatsi's worldview complete, expressing his religious mentality, the limitedness of the world vision of that epoch and the deep influence of the church ideology and theological scholasticism"³⁶. As it is seen, they solve the controversy by considering the disputable Prayers as supplementing and concretizing the content of the other Prayers (in these Prayers Narekatsi enlarges and goes 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. It is confirmed by the following citation: "Narekatsi's position for the of the church and against the people who defamed it was distinct here (in Prayer 75). According to Narekatsi, to neglect the order, mystery of the church is the same as to raise one's hand against God: *...raises a hand in malice against the heavenly kingdom*"³⁷. Khachatryan and Ghazinyan see 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 comprise 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 are written from different perspectives of the tenth-century ideological struggle but by the same person. Right is M. Mkryan considering that Narekatsi "has 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 violate the purposeful structure of his poem with religious prosaic "insertions" two-three times"³⁸. But why not? Is it less 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 mentioned reasons, in order to provide 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

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

³⁷ Ibid., p. 153.

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

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 were a separate work, and that Narekatsi wrote them independently from his *Book of Lamentations* is apparent from the fact that they comprise a writing with a common aim—a whole work referring to the doctrine of the Armenian Church. Which is that ideological aim that unites the disputable Prayers in an entity? Narekatsi was undoubtedly aware of what he was charged with: the first point concerned the mystery of the Holy Trinity and closely connected with it, the problem of Christ's nature. Narekatsi was accused of being Dyophysites' co-thinker; 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 (something which comes from Narekatsi's mysticism and is 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 tries 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. It is obvious from the comparative analysis of the disputable and other lyrical Prayers that they are different not only in regard to their linguistic-stylistic peculiarities but also in regard 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 the possibility of the multiple interpretation of the poetic discourse, doctrinal kinds of issues, touched upon in the lyrical Prayers, are given in the diversity of their solutions, sometimes in logically contrastive interpretations, something which is the result of the author's creative ease, free-thinking, on the other hand the result of disobedience to blind faith, the dogmatism of the church, making the reader think of the raised problems freely. In contrast to them, the disputable Prayers are one-sided and boring. From this standpoint, q (c), η (d), է (e), q (f), է (g) parts of Prayer 34 are closer to the lyrical Prayers. It can be assumed that 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 η (d), է (e), q (f) of Prayer 75, though touching upon the same topic, are essentially different from each other: these parts of Prayer 34 are richer in content and can be

interpreted in multiple ways, in contrast to the mentioned parts of Prayer 75. Besides, it is hardly possible that two narrations on the same issue (the nature of the Holy Trinity) might be in same work, *Profession of Faith*. That is why it is thought that the mentioned parts of Prayer 75 (which are closer to the doctrine of the church and in which the author's judgments are less) were from the *Profession of Faith* and they were immediately followed by ք (h) ր (i) parts of Prayer 34.

B. Glorifying God in the lyrical Prayers, relating man's salvation immediately to God, Narekatsi really neglects the church and its attributes. Moreover, there is a discrimination on his part as to the persons of the Holy Trinity, more emphasizing the Son and what is most striking, even Godhead is sometimes derogated, while the contrary is seen in the disputable Prayers: Narekatsi does not deviate, he strictly follows the requirements of the religious dogmatism, displaying his competence of the Holy Book, and the most important is that the great role of the church in man's salvation is especially emphasized.

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

Thus the author composes and inserts 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 is tied to Prayer 33. After wording the doctrine of the Holy Trinity of the Nicene Creed the poet writes:

*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 tie too. In this respect, Khachatryan and Ghazinyan note: “In Prayers 33 and 34 Narekatsi mainly writes about his credo, his profession. It requires a different style, different order and different technique. In other words, they are not lines 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 non-poetic Prayer 34 to poetic Prayers. 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 too, the great poet asks the contrary, to accept the others with this one...

For Prayer 75, parts u (a) and p (b) are “ties”. Of special importance is part u (a). Khachatryan and Ghazinyan think that Prayer 75 was written for the poem too and not independently from it. In this concern, they write: “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

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

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 writes this Prayer also mentioning his speech (Prayer 34) which is devoted to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. According to Narekatsi, the church is the true and glorious mother (i.e. the basis) of any believer's spiritual birth, without which it is impossible to cleanse oneself of sins, communicate with saints and be worthy of the heavenly salvation, 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. Of course, 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, something which indicates that these Prayers were really created independently from the poem and before being inserted in the poem, they comprised an entire work. As the author himself has 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 not connected with the contexture of the poem. All this shows that really the disputable Prayers were created independently from the poem and before the creation of the poem comprised an entire work with a solid structure of the content.

* * *

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

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 mystery of the church, 3) symbols of the Armenian Church... That is to say, in these Prayers Narekatsi writes the foundations and the roots of the faith of the Armenian Church, assuring that they are his personal convictions too.

Narekatsi was once accused of being a schismatic, sectarian, tsayt, Tondrakian, Paulican, Manichaeian. 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 comprised the front of the opposition. 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

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 1089.

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, that mighty anti-feudal, anti-church movement in medieval Armenia. These points are: a) distortion of the concept of God, the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, overestimation of Christ's saving role, in general deliberateness in preference for the Son rather than other persons of the Holy Trinity, the Father and the Holy Spirit. Narekatsi much emphasizes especially Christ's philanthropy, closeness to man, earthliness; something which was viewed as deviation towards Chalsedonism. Not only this; human nature is marked, emphasized in the Son, on the other hand Narekatsi much glorifies man, equaling him with God, it even becomes a worship of man (and not only God is man but also a man is God). To cut it short, Narekatsi can be easily 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 Tondrakians' co-thinker, "because of the mixture of different sects, they 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, intolerable" attitude towards any kind of deviation. And this is done by Grigor Narekatsi, the author of the *Book of Lamentations*, a man who prefers logical thinking for blind faith, a thinker who respects all the possible more or less reasonable viewpoints, and suddenly he displays such a one-sided and abrupt approach.

Putting down the Nicene Creed, Narekatsi forbids deviations from it, he threatens 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 by nature spiritual

thereby introducing an alien being or unstable mixture

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

*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 passes on to the interpretation of the mystery and order of the church. Khachatryan and Ghazinyan write: “By spiritual church Narekatsi understands believers, by physical church a temple which is worshiped not as a material building, as it would be sectarianism, but as God’s home, a sanctuary, a door which leads to heavenly kingdom... According to Narekatsi, the mystery of a church is different from the mystery of a temple. Cults were worshiped in temples, the almighty God is worshiped in churches. The worship of Christian God destroyed the worship of idols, opposing the faith of the Holy Trinity to polytheism. Narekatsi rejects the Paulician and Tondrakian views, according to which churches are nothing more than a transformation of pagan temples”⁴².

Not only Tondrakians but also Dyophysites are criticized in Narekatsi's interpretation of the mystery of church. Probably some ideological features, common for Tondrakians and Dyophysites, are indicated here. In medieval Armenia the official church reproached both Tondrakians and Chalcedonians as man worshipers and materialists. Narekatsi's criticism of Tondrakians was at the same time directed against Dyophysites. In both cases the great thinker

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

tried to assure that he was not a man worshiper, he worshiped God. In so doing, Narekatsi ensured himself from accusations of being a tsayt and Tondrakian.

Narekatsi interprets church symbols, the mysteries of the bell-ringer's stick, muron, icons, etc the same way too. This is a common feature which is developed in the disputable Prayers of the *Narek*. Thus, according to Narekatsi's logic, if someone considers icons, muron, a bell-ringer's stick, church buildings only material then such a person considers Christ only a man not God, which at the same time means the rejection of the Holy Trinity:

*And woe to him who raises a hand in malice
against the heavenly kingdom as if
the doctrine of the church made by hands
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 mystery of the will of the creator,
and the institution founded with wisdom by the right hand of apostles,
in a word, the gate of heaven,
the city of the 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 the one Godhead,
forever and ever. (Pr. 75, M)*

It is quite obvious that while composing the disputable Prayers Narekatsi displays a special attitude. In order to reject the accusations of neglecting the significance and the role of the church, assigned to him, the author starts to glorify the church. He had a reason for it: as it is known, Narekatsi was educated in the church from childhood, consequently in order not to be called an “ungrateful son” the poet praises and exalts the church, considering it the true and glorious mother of every believer’s spiritual birth, a mother without whom it is impossible to cleanse oneself of sins and be worthy of the heavenly kingdom (see Prayer 75, parts Է (g), Ը (h), Թ (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, which is the most important, with its anti-Chalcedonian orientation, paraphrases Narekatsi’s “Epistle” against Tondrakians. And with the discussed issues and topics, 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 comprised a complete 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 proof that the disputable Prayers were written because of the trial.

It becomes clear from all this why the work *Profession of Faith* has not survived in the Catholicos's Archives and even has not been mentioned by later scribes, while Grigor Narekatsi's Epistle to the clergy of the monastery of Kchav has 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 this very fact is hinted by Samuel Anetsi 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, when 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...*

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

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 tells in the first part of Chapter One of his *History of Armenians* (this part being the preface of his work) that he has 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 calls it, at the request of a Vardapet of the monastery of Narek. Narekatsi's name is not mentioned concretely anywhere in the text. It is only said 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"; "Reply to Anania's letter and my promise to fulfill his request"⁴⁴.

But it is known that these titles were not written by the author; they were added by scribes of later periods, something which is a result of either a mistake or deliberateness. And thus traditionally there has been dominated a belief in Armenian studies that Ukhtanes wrote his *History* at the request of Anania Narekatsi. Among scholars of Armenian studies only P. Peeters has been skeptical about this belief, doubting its truthfulness, however running to another extreme. Denying that point of view he states that the Vardapet who ordered Ukhtanes to write his *History* was not a representative of the School of Narek at all.

It is written in the very Preface of Ukhtanes's *History* that the Vardapet of the monastery of Narek, at whose request Ukhtanes wrote his *History*, was in the Catholicos's 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 speak 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; it was nine o'clock"⁴⁶.

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

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

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 1-15.

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

Zaza Aleksidze, a scholar of Armenian studies, thinks that the people and dates in Ukhtanes's work refer to his (Anania Narekatsi's – S. P.) activity. He writes: "It is true that the title of Ukhtanes's work should be considered to belong to a later period but anyway it is assumed 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 the 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. M. Ormanyan and Hr. Acharyan admit the year 973, N. Akinyan the year 987⁴⁸. Philologist Hrachya Tamrazyan, whose PhD dissertation is devoted to Anania Narekatsi's life and works, even thinks that the meeting in Argina could take place in 980s as Smbat the Second sat on the throne in 977, consequently that meeting could not take place in 973. Either 980 or 987. The most probable among these two dates is the year 987 and this is why: the Vardapet who went to Argina from the monastery of Narek took with him a work, entitled *Havatarmat* (Roots of faith), 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 Chalcedonism. It can be assumed that this all has a direct connection to the extreme aggravation of Armenian-Chalcedonian relationships dating back to the year 986.

* * *

Until recently there dominated the idea in Armenian studies that Anania Narekatsi wrote his *Letter of Confession* by the Catholicos Anania Mokars'i's order (G. Ter-Mkrchyan, B. Sargsyan, G. Hovsepyan, M. Abeghyan, M. Mkryan); "We learn from his (Anania Narekatsi's)

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

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.

Khostovanagir (Letter of Confession) that he lived in the same place with Anania Mokatsi and on the verge of his death cursed Tondrakians, not willingly but fulfilling the Catholicos's demand⁴⁹.

However, analyzing the biographical data in the *Letter of Confession*, Hr. Tamrazyan comes to the conclusion that Anania Narekatsi's letter was 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 are from the same province, most probably from Arsharunik, spent their childhood and student years together.

Hr. Tamrazyan's viewpoint seems quite possible though the following circumstances should not be neglected: 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 the same age with Anania Mokatsi rather than Khachik the First. Anania Mokatsi and Khachik Arsharuni died almost at the same age. Asoghik says the same 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 come to the conclusion 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 age with Khachik (thus they could not spend 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 was founded before 943, before the death of Gagik Artsruni, because in one of the survived manuscripts (Matenadaran, manuscript № 7359) of the *Haysmavurk* there is a miniature in which Gagik Artsruni gives the keys of the monastery to Anania Narekatsi. Anania Narekatsi was probably about 40 at that time because before the foundation of the monastery of Narek together with the clergyman Petros he had served in the monasteries of Antak and Khavaradzor of the provinces of Havnunk and Arsharunik respectively and already that time 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* was addressed to Khachik Arsharuni is based on the following judgment: Catholicos Anania Mokatsi could not order one and the same author to write a work against Tondrakians, then accuse him of adhering to the Tondrakian movement and then force him to write the *Letter of Confession*. Thus, Hr. Tamrazyan draws a logically true conclusion: it was not Anania Mokatsi but Catholicos Khachik

⁴⁹ *Ararat*, Ejmiatsin, 1987, p. 94.

Arsharuni that made Anania Narekatsi curse 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 from the same author as proof of its author's true faith, Catholicos Khachik Arsharuni would accuse that author of sectarianism and schism. Our answer to it: firstly, Tondrakism was a mixture of all sects of the time; secondly, Anania Narekatsi was also accused of Chalcedonism that is why he also curses Chalcedonians in the *Letter of Confession*.

There is only one way to overcome this deadlock: to accept that Anania Narekatsi's *Letter of Confession* was really addressed to the Catholicos Khachik Arsharuni but in this case the existence of the *Havatarmat* is impossible. And really if Anania Narekatsi made a present of such a work to Khachik the First why would the Catholicos accuse him shortly thereafter? And one more very important fact: A. Narekatsi says 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 in his heart, he himself will be cursed by the above mentioned saints"⁵⁰.

Let us compare it with a part of Narekatsi'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 it was the clergymen of Kchav who spoke ill of Anania Narekatsi to the Catholicos, considering his *Argument against Tondrakians and other Sectarians (Hakacharank)* not a sincere composition. It was this that made the Catholicos doubt Anania Narekatsi's true faith. Anania Narekatsi's *Argument against 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 myself not in a perfunctory manner or without thinking or in order to please you but so that you know about me from me and by deciphering my previous writings, you realize my godliness. Without any consideration, I perceive the truthfulness of all canons and will accept it before God and holy angles, avoiding doctrines adopted by all ungodly people as I have previously written about them. And now the same verdict will be issued if someone approves or believes what you have written about me. Thanks God. And I will say: cursed is the one who relies on man and not on God, the lord of heaven and earth, and cursed is the one who relies on his power"⁵². This leads to the question: if Anania Narekatsi mentions his *Hakacharank* in his *Letter of Confession* as proof of his true faith, having written *Hakacharank* many years before at the request of Anania

⁵⁰"Ararat", Ejmiatsin, 1982.

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

⁵² "Ararat", 1982, p. 18.

Moakatsi, why does he not mention *Havatarmat* written later and presented to Khachik Arrsharuni? It follows that he did not write any work entitled *Havatarmat* during the period between the *Argument against Tondrakians and other Sectarians* and the *Letter of Confession* or else he would mention it in the *Letter of Confession*, written on the verge of his death.

If Anania Narekatsi had a work, entitled *Havatarmat* at least some information would survive. It would be at least mentioned in the Armenian literature. 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. *Hakachrank* has not come down to us either but some parts of it have survived.

Attempts are made in Armenian studies to find extracts from Anania Narekatsi's *Havatarmat*: In his article *Anania Sanahentsi's Hakacharutyun*⁵³, H. Qyoseyan rightfully notes that in *Armat Havatoy (Roots of Faith)*, a religious-theological collection compiled by Vardan Aygektsi, the extracts attributed to Vardapet Anania belong to Anania Narekatsi. Proceeding from the fact that the survived extracts mainly concern the problems connected with Christ's nature, the author thinks that these are shreds from the very *Havatarmat* written by Anania Narekatsi. This opinion is unconvincing first of all because, as Vardan Aygektsi himself says, he has taken these extracts "from the Armenian Vardapet Anania Narekatsi's praise-worthy book on faith". Anania Narekatsi's "praise-worthy book on faith" can be only *Hakacharank* as only that work made the author famous. Besides, Anania Narekatsi's work was directed not only against Tondrakians but also against other sectarians. In that work the author lashes with words not only Tondrakians but also particularly Chalcedonians, defending and grounding the Monophysite principle of the doctrine of the Armenian Church. It results from the fact that Catholicos Anania Mokatsi ordered him to write *Hakacharank* not only in concern with the activation of the Tondrakian movement but also in concern with the utmost escalation of Armenian-Chalcedonian relationships during the reign of Emperor Romanos.

Let us quote one of the parts attributed to Anania Narekatsi, come down to us through Vardan Aygektsi: "And as the fire does not change the nature of gold and iron, only adjusts them to its light, or like light mixed with air or the body and soul, which are united harmoniously and make man's essence one, God's Word, too, is united unmixedly, beyond our understanding"⁵⁴. H. Qyoseyan found out that the phrases *gold and iron with fire* and *light in/with air* have not been used in any work previously. After Anania Narekatsi these simile-phrases are found in the letter

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

⁵⁴ Ibid.

(986) addressed to the Metropolitan of Sebastia, that letter being preserved in Asoghik's History, and in Anania Sanahentsi's *Hakacharank*. It is worthy of note, that these phrases are 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 a gold with fire,

or to put it more plainly,

light in air, neither transformed nor separated.

It is logical to think that the author of the letter addressed to the Metropolitan of Sebastia and Grigor Narekatsi have taken these similes from the same source: "from the Armenian Vardapet Anania Narekatsi's praise-worthy book on faith". Anania Narekatsi's praise-worthy 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 and the letter addressed to the Metropolitan of Sebastia was written in 986. This testifies that praise-worthy book on faith is Anania Narekatsi's *Hakacharank* written against 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 verge of his death, during the period between 980 (987) and 992. There is no reason to prolong A. Narekatsi's life till the end of the 10th century. Firstly, we found out that Anania Narekatsi did not have 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 verge 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 writes in his *History of the Cross of Aparan* (983) that from the monastery of Narek, only his brother Hovhannes and he took part in the great religious festival in the province of Mokq (Moxene). In

this concern M. Chamchian notes that at the time Hovannes was the dean of the monastery of Narek and Grigor the principal of the school of Narek⁵⁵. In his *Aparanits Khachin Patmutyune (History of the Cross of Aparan)* Gr. Narekatsi talks about Anania Narekatsi in the past tense.

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.

Making reference to Asoghik, M. Ormanyan writes the following about Khachik Arsharuni's work during the first years of his office: "The first result of Khachik's activity was the end of the dissensions over the throne of the catholicos, and he was able to make all the parties come to an agreement and "ruling alone, 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. If we consider the fact of Catholicos Vahan's authority in the province of Vaspurakan and particularly in the monastery of Narek, it will become clear why Anania Narekatsi curses not only Tondrakians but also Chalcedonians in his *Khostovanagir*. The thing that A. Narekatsi died during the first years of the of Kachik the First's reign is obvious from the fact that Asoghik attributes 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. Lots of monasteries were built for clergymen.

There were also Vardapets and true teachers who were good at the Lord's teachings. Among them were: an elderly man, Basilos, knowing Lord's laws fairly well; non-monastic priest Grigor, a rhetorician of Lord's Commandments; Barsegh's disciple Stepanos who became a clergyman with his word and work befitting disciples; a wise and pious eminent Movsess who fasted forty days; poor David; a stingy scholar named Mashkot, a commentator of the Holy Book, Petros, and Anania, the great philosopher of the monastery of Narek. His book is directed against Tondrakians and other sectarians"⁵⁷.

And Anania Narekatsi's name is not mentioned at all in the list of prominent Vardapets acting during Khachik the First's term of office.

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

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

⁵⁷ Asoghik, *History*, pp. 184-186.

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 Narekati's activities. During the time of 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 was ordered to write his *History* by no one else but Grigor Narekatsi.

In the Preface of the *History* the biographical information and lofty praises refer to Grigor Narekatsi rather than to Anania Narekatsi.

- 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 monastery of Narek, you, most glorious lord, universal Vardapet, sprouted, came into leaf and then bloomed with your virtue in Lord's home, bringing fruits of justice". The historian apparently tells that Grigor Narekatsi lived, was educated and raised, became mature in the monastery of Narek, flourished and "brought fruits", i.e. started his creative activity at that school and then became the pillar and the headmaster of the school, something which cannot be attributed to Anania Narekatsi because historian Asoghik informs that the school of the monastery of Narek was founded by Vardapet Anania during Anania Mokatsi's term of office. Anania Narekatsi came to the monastery as a famous scholar. In this concern Hr. Tamrazyan writes, "Valuable information has survived about Anania Narekatsi's life before coming to the monastery of Narek. That period of his activities is connected with the monasteries of Khavaradzor and Antak in the provinces Arsharunik and Havnunik respectively. Already in that period, Anania Narekatsi was considered one of the outstanding scholars of his time and took part in religious-doctrinal debates.
- b) "And exalting yourself with much effort and virtue and leading to the spiritual fields, you wait for Lord's coming with alert and watchful farmers". Doesn't Uktanes hint at the name Grigor by the words "alert and watchful farmers" (արթնեալ և զգուշացեալ սշալ) which, as the genius poet interprets in his *Book of Lamentations*, mean awake and guardian?
- c) In the Preface of his *History* Ukhtanes calls the Vardapet, at whose request he wrote his book, "religious author and outstanding rhetorician" and "poet", etc. As it is known, not

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

only Anania Narekatsi but also especially Grigor Narekatsi displayed fascinating musical ability.

- d) Some similarity of the style of Ukhtanes's *History* and the style of Grigor's works speaks of Ukhtanes's close relationship with Grigor and the latter's influence on him. As Z. Aleksidze notes, Ukhtanes tried to write some of the Prayers of his *History* in the form of a rhythmical prose, displaying a considerable ability of alliteration. The historian did all this to satisfy his requester's taste. In order to show the linguostylistic closeness and similarity of Uktanes's work to Grigor's style, Z. Aleksidze brings the following parts as examples: "With his wise and meaningful thoughts he thwarted bishops' evil plans. His letters and words completely reveal 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: if it is said "let it be" it will be". The historian (Uktanes) assesses and evaluates his requester as a great ecclesiastical and social figure on whom the hopes of the restoration and strengthening of the church are pinned. This part resembles in some ways a part in *Haysmavurk* which assesses Grigor Narekatsi's activities; it says: "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 at last, Grigor Narekatsi was interested in the Georgian reality a little (see M. Chamchian), so it is probable that the undertaker of writing the history of the Armenian-Georgian partition was Grigor Narekatsi.

* * *

Maybe by accepting that Grigor Narekatsi was Ukhtanes's pen-friend, that they were co-thinkers, that they met in Argina in 987 and had a talk about the book we would content ourselves to this much but for the following questions arising spontaneously:

- 1) Why does not Ukhtanes mention the name of the Vardapet at whose request he wrote his *History*, why does he avoid saying his name explicitly when he venerates him so much and gives enough information about his personality, his mental abilities, poetic talent, etc.?
- 2) It is also important to find out why the historian does not mention the year of the meeting, the season, the month, the date, which day of the week or what time it was.

- 3) And at last the most important thing: the answer to the question of why Ukhtanes does not give in the Preface the real reason of Narekatsi's long journey to Argina, to Catholicos Khachik because it is quite clear that Narekatsi would hardly go to Argina only for meeting Ukhtanes and proposing him to write the *History*.

In order to clarify these questions it is necessary to consider the information of Narekatsi's journey to Argina and his taking with him *Havatarmat* written against Dyophysites in the background of the social-political and ideological struggle in the second half of the 10th century, comparing the little information about the great thinker's and genius poet's life and activity with the ecclesiastical events in the middle of the eighties of the 10th century.

In this period the Armenian Church was pressed by the neighbor Chalcedonian churches. The ecclesiastical-doctrinal struggle escalated into violations during Khachik the First's term of office: "It was during his (Catholicos Khachik's) reign that Vardaprt 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 Aksigom in the province of Basen, now the monastery is called St. Hovhan monastery and lies at the foot of the mountain of apricots"⁵⁹.

The same historian speaks of the persecutions of the clergymen belonging to the Armenian Apostolic Church in Sebastia and other Armenian-populated cities in Byzantium. If we compare these facts with Ukhtanes's information that only due to king Smbat the Second's order, bishops', lords' and other high-ranking people's mediation and blessing it was possible to overcome all the threats directed against him and start writing his *History*, it seems quite possible that during the very meeting in 987, in which king Smbat and Armenian princes participated too, the historian was officially permitted to write his *History* (or its second and third parts).

Thus in my opinion, Gr. Narekatsi and Ukhtanes met in Argina on the 11th of the month Tre in 987 on the occasion of the ecclesiastical council headed by Catholicos Khachik Arsharuni. It was a council to which Grigor Narekatsi was invited to be inquired. It can be assumed that for this very reason Ukhtanes does not speak of that unpleasant event, does not mention even his requester's name, does not speak of the real reason of their meeting in Argina.

However, which is the work entitled *Havatarmat* which Narekatsi took to Argina with him? There is no such work in the Armenian Literature attributed to Grigor Narekatsi. But the unity of the disputable Prayers of Narekatsi's *Book of Lamentations* which we conventionally named

⁵⁹ Asoghik, *History*, p. 184.

Havatoy Sahmank (Profession of Faith) with its content and anti-sectarian orientation could be taken to Argina under the title *Havatarmat*.

Let us summarize what have been said. According to the suggested hypothesis, Ukhtanes was ordered to write his *History* not by Anania but by Grigor Narekatsi, whom Ukhtanes met in Argina in 987. That meeting was not accidental: Grigor went to Argina to attend the council convened to try him. As an evidence of his true faith he took with him a work entitled *Havatarmat*, written against sectarians. The unity of disputable Prayers of Narekatsi's *Book of Lamentations* could be that work. In his *Armenian authors, 5th-17th centuries*, the famous bibliographer N. Pogharean, mentions a manuscript by Anania Narekatsi entitled *Against Dyophysites* which is kept in the library of Armenian manuscripts in Jerusalem⁶⁰. And 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 extracted interesting information about Anania Narekatsi from that manuscript. The further investigation of these two and other sources may shed a definitive light on whether Anania Narekatsi had or did not have a separate work entitled *Havatarmat* and whether this hypothesis of mine is right or wrong.

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

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

Grigor Narekatsi's humanism

Grigor Narekatsi had an influence on the development of both Armenian literary and social-philosophical thought. The main aspects of Narekatsi's worldview are manifested in his lyrical poem *Book of Lamentations*, which has been read with pleasure and interest over the course of many centuries and has even become an object of worship. Narekatsi's worldview is mainly religious-idealistic, but of historical importance are the problems put forward by him and disguised as religious-idealistic in nature, the solutions of these problems, spontaneous dialectical ideas and principles which suddenly brought up Narekatsi against the medieval Scholasticism and blind faith.

The great poet's worldview has not been fully studied yet. Till now studies are partial, referring to this or that aspect of his views, mainly to his philosophical worldview, to its nature. The elucidation of the latter 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 attitude, Leo), then Narekatsi's progressive views were revealed, the nature of these views was qualified as pantheism (H. Gabrielyan, M. Mkryan). Chaloyan's contribution to the revelation of the nature of the *Narek* is great. In his valuable work *History of Armenian Philosophy* he regards Narekatsi's philosophy pantheistic too but "it is not only a philosophy of pantheism but also an indication to neoplatonic 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 is pantheism,⁶² and Neoplatonism is only "indicated" as a source of pantheism. Today it is already clear that Narekatsi's worldview is neoplatonic but not only that. Narekatsi is a representative of Neoplatonism in the period of Renaissance. Neoplatonic views were developed by him to some extent. It is not a mere imitation or literal revival of Hellenistic and Christian Neoplatonism but a definite, a higher-level development with almost the same

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

⁶² V. K. Chaloyan writes: "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 is man's relationship with God". It is hard to agree with this viewpoint because the main philosophical question is put by Narekatsi in the form of the interrelation of God and man, as accepted in Middle Ages. In the literary-philosophical system of Narekatsi's views the concept of "Man" is also the symbol of the whole nature; thus the "God-Man" interrelation is viewed as "God-Nature" interrelation. Besides, Chaloyan himself discovers 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.

tendencies which are seen in the works of Nikolas of Cusa. As to pantheism, it is not the main essence of Narekatsi's worldview and his philosophical system, it is only an aspect, an element of that system, and the whole system is built not on the basis of pantheism but on the basis of Neoplatonism. The idea of pantheism is indicated in his work as one of the conclusions of Neoplatonic philosophy.

V. K. Chaloayn writes: "In contrast to the Christian religion, Grigor Narekatsi's pantheism consists in the fact 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, one can point to not only the above mentioned words by Narekatsi referring to the union of man and God in which he equally claims the existence of God in man and man in God but also to the idea that God is in everything and everything is in God⁶³. And really nature is identical with God for Narekatsi. For instance, in his *Tagh ekeghetsu ev tachari* (Ode to Church and Temple) the author expresses the idea that the heavenly church descends to earth becoming earthly, and he asks whom the temple resembles and answers that the temple resembles 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 believes that the universe is eternal as God is the *renewer of the universe*, that clusters of stars disappear but appear again, that the elements become temporary and reestablish as permanent, that the end of the world is the destruction of this visible world and not the whole material one, and that destruction is not a final, an absolute one either as *the creatures together with all their elements will be recreated in 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 is also transcendental and higher than it. 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

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

man) strive to unite with God, the absolute perfectness, would be in vain; this striving is 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 unexaminable,

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 marks: "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 both denied and is not. In this respect, Gevorg Khrlopyan writes: "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 literal interpretation of the supernatural is completely denied by the author. Considering the concept of God philosophically, he displays two approaches. On the one hand, he views God as strictly abstract, on the other hand, God, as an end, is quite concrete as he is already the alienated reality, the greatness and value existing in every human and object, an incarnate God and a divinized man"⁶⁵.

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

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.

solves the main problem of philosophy from the position of Neoplatonism, however reflecting some specificity and ability of dialectical thinking. It is manifested in the following: 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 the content of the *Book of Lamentations*. He writes: “The inner strong dramatic states and the development of *Narek* are first of all conditioned by its ideological essence and nature. As a mystic, Narekatsi’s greatest aim is to be worthy seeing God and to 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, succeed each other; moreover, in contrast to this example from nature, they are 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 push one another like waves, replace one another, and the larger and stronger one becomes, the larger and stronger becomes the other.

The dramatic development of the poem is created this way”⁶⁶. This extract is quoted 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 they are differentiated again. 3) Man (nature) is relatively eternal and temporary, infinite and finite to the extent possible by man, and God is absolutely eternal and temporary to the extent possible by God. 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 possible by man (nature), 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, and thus a man cannot be God; when thinking of sameness he

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

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, 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. That is why it would be more correct to term the whole system of Narekatsi's views literary-philosophical, as thought and emotion are mutually determined, are transmuted into each other: during the differentiation the thought (that man is not God, eternal) becomes the cause of stirring up of 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 becomes the cause of good mood, positive emotions, and in this way, thought becomes the cause of emotion and vice versa.

It should be noted that there is another important fact: Narekatsi or the lyrical hero does not always give way to despair; on the contrary, during one of the phases of differentiation he is pleased with the idea that man is not God. However striking and odd it may seem, it is so. Narekatsi guesses and realizes that to be God means to be deprived of everything that is human and earthly, that to be absolutely eternal means to be absolutely temporary too, that is why he 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 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.

* * *

The influence of Neoplatonism on Narekatsi's philosophical views comes from the great Armenian philosopher of the 5th-6th centuries, David Anhaght, and the Corpus Areopagiticum, well-known in Armenia. Though the influence of the ideas of the false theory of neoplatonic emanation is little on Narekatsi, it is 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, boundless one.

You were measured, unexaminable one.

You focused light, radiant one.

You became human, incorporeal one.

You became tangible, immeasurable one.

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

The fragment of the divine essence incarnates this way. Nowhere in the *Book of Lamentations* is it mentioned that the whole material world was formed from the self-alienation of the unity, God. But according to Narekatsi, God is *in the substance of existence unto the ends of the earth* (Pr. 41, B), *is always offered and yet remains whole, ... who is all in everyone and complete in all things* (Pr. 47, B). Fragments of the divine essence, *which are glimmering rays of your cloud of light* (Pr. 81, B) exist in every element.

Emanationists tried carefully not only to infer the graduation of everything existing from the divine unity, but also to show the way back to the initial divine unity. Narekatsi was mostly influenced by this one, as the solution of the problems of *Man* and human happiness are related to this way for him.

Grigor Narekatsi raises the great question of the meaning of man's life and existence (this statement of question was in itself 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 is aimed at answering that great, universal question. According to Narekatsi, God is an absolute perfection, and man is imperfect by nature. But in contrast to beings not endowed with intellect, man is close to the divine perfectness. Narekatsi scolds those who do not understand this:

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, eternity man can become God, be eternal and cannot. In general, dominant in Narekatsi's logic is the principle of "both....and" and not "either....or".

He claims that man cannot become God, to be eternal (*And although we ascend to you, our first element, earth, holds us down* (Pr. 86, A) because man's nature is different from God's nature because man is mortal that is why his sins are endless: *The pit is vile and hell is all-encompassing* (Pr. 8, A), i.e. the problem of being and not being hangs on man's head like the Damocles sword. It is here that Narekatsi's humanism is manifested: he infers man's happiness and immortality from man's very nature and sees it in man's creative and reforming activity.

On the other hand, Narekatsi claims that man can become God absolutely. In this case, Narekatsi's mysticism is 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. At first he just wants God to forgive his sins and to make him be worthy of seeing God. He tries to justify his demand in this way:

Before I was, 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 to sin and

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

Narekatsi judges this way: If God created man, he was in need of him. He hints 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,

and even those who sin are yours,

for they are in your accounting. (Pr. 31, D)

In Narekatsi's opinion, God is consoled only by man's salvation. Man is a part of God's accounting that is why man's loss is not pleasant to God. Hence, the great philosopher draws the following conclusion: because of man's loss the divine perfection will be shattered:

as with the cutting off or loss of an unruly organ,

infecting the body.

Something is lost in your mortal structure,

feeling abode of mankind,

and the usual shape of the person undergoes

some disfigurement. (Pr. 46, C)

Consequently, he demands on 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) man can reach the divine eternity absolutely.

But then Narekatsi seems to become milder. God has 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, has to admit that all the manifestations of his imperfect nature, i.e. sins alienate man from God. He should not only realize it but also feel it deeply and regret because "*I have sinned*" is a blessed phrase for the heart set on hope (Pr. 27, C); in this way man can 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 utter these words unwillingly and forcibly:

They do not have perfect love and consequently will not have salvation either.

In this case, Narekatsi equals the human perfection with the divine perfection. His mysticism comes from the pseudo-theory of neoplatonic emanation: if the whole nature including man emerged from the alienation, "outflow" of the divine unity then, according to Narekatsi, to become God (man=the whole nature) implies inflow to the initial unity, to God. Moreover, in Narekatsi's opinion man is the only being in nature that is able to return to the initial unity, and he sees the meaning of man's life in this. What is important here is the way back. Thus, as a mystic, Narekatsi really denies 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 extent possible by him. Narekatsi sees that human affairs surpass those of God: *I shudder at the thought that my accounts, the accounts of a mere mortal go too far* (Pr. 59, A). (What courage! Such rebellious ideas are driven like wedges among Narekatsi's many devotional ideas and lines). He "persuades" 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 who 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).

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

Man always strives for the absolute divine perfection but cannot reach it, and thus human perfection is confined to human abilities, to the material world and with the help of it to life activity through continuous learning of the eternal, God. 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 Anghat words it, man resembles God to the extent possible by man. Both David Anghat and Narekatsi see the resemblance in the following: if God already knows everything, man (a perfect philosopher for

David Anahgt) seeks to know everything, if God can do as much as he wants, a perfect man wants as much as he can do:

*I have averted my attention from the greatest and
presented the lesser points that are within
my meager ability. (Pr. 38, B)*

In this case, Narekatsi acts as a great humanist, supporting the earthly life and man. He does not demand mortification body, suppression passions, vice versa healing of body. Thus, he supports active life:

*He (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 supports 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 sees man's mission, his moral greatness in this. Besides its moral aspect, every good, positive deed supports life practically, contributes to man's existence, to his immortalization humanly. Proceeding from these positions, he assesses the merits of his poem. He thinks that those who will read his *Book of Lamentations* will be cleansed of sins, will become kinder, will love life, and this all will be a monument of 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)*

Not forgetting that Narekatsi's book is a literary work, that 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 one takes Narekatsi's concept of God for the whole nature, for universe (the contemporary reader interprets it this very way), everything will be clear, 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 it, but nature has endowed man with intellect to perfect nature itself. Due to his intellect man changes nature but these changes, however fantastic may seem, are real in nature, are a part of nature's *accounting*. With his existence and activities, man contributes to the eternal existence of nature and he himself tries to become eternal to the extent possible by him.

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 active 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. It is this that accounts for 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 are alien to him, and that his poetry is devoid of purely national features, national feeling, style, color. Of course, no. Narekatsi is a purely Armenian, purely national phenomenon. He is 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, is folklore.

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

It is beyond doubt that in the 10th century stories of spring, awakening of nature, fruitfulness, death-rebirth-deity (Ara), of the deities of 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, others) but also from folklore.

The secularization of the spiritual life leads to nature and man becoming the subject matter and purpose of literature and poetry. In Narekatsi’s lays, the love towards nature became equal to the worship of nature, and this is the result of the impact of the pagan culture. M. Mkryan writes: “Narekatsi’s lays are first of all songs of nature worship; the poet is admired with 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 behind this veil, the use of the treasures of folklore, saving them from oblivion, expressing love of life and the new humanistic moods and putting them into literary circulation again. Very likely, as a controversial thinker and a moderate reformer he pursued both of these goals at once. If we follow in the footsteps of the process of the creation of Narekatsi’s lays gradually, it will become obvious that the poet freely employed elements of the pagan figurative linguomentality. 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* became *fiery-haired child* (in 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 is born like a sun,

As a personal 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, giving high praise to Narekatsi’s and Rustaveli’s literary heritage, marked that the source of the works of these great poets of Caucasian literature is the Habetian (Caucasian) base, 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. At first views God and the sun as incompatibly different from each other. The sun is made of air; it is material and thereby different from God; 2. Then the author makes the first step towards their identification on the basis of the comparison of 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 *Sun of justice*. This image-expression was first used in the Armenian Christian poetry by Mesrop Mashtots 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 just patron of mankind and a fair judge. For Narekatsi Christ as a *Sun of justice* bears this ideological charge too:

Lord of all, Jesus Christ,

Son of the 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 Narekatsi’s two 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 to his right, the seraphim with six wings

And to his left, the cherubim with many eyes.

This part of Narekatsi's well-known *Ode to Resurrection* has become a kind of Sphinx mystery in Narekatsi studies. There are different viewpoints on the meaning of *chariot*. The philologist Armine Qyoshkeryan writes: "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 there has been put forward an idea, according to which with the help of the divine chariot and oxen Narekatsi depicted Christ's resurrection, 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 with which the ark of the divine commandments given to Moses was taken to Jerusalem (A. Mnatsakanyan)⁶⁹. A. Qyoshkeryan thinks that the explanation of the ode is to be found in the part beginning with the following 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 are most probably folk legends and myths, which were of course refined literarily. M. Mkryan writes, "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 death-rebirth-deity is connected with Ara Geghetsik (Ara the Beautiful), it can be assumed that this lay is based on a 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 Christianity the people of Vaspurakan province remembered their Ara in Christ. That is why that image of Narekatsi's "chariot", as an allegory, is connected with Christ's resurrection as it used to symbolize Ara's rebirth.

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.

But in what way 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, fruitfulness and agriculture, Ara was also worshiped as a deity of 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, fruitfulness and love but also the sun.

The sun worship used to be pan-Armenia but it 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. For the people of Vaspurakan it means that the sun sets and falls asleep in Lake Van and the contrary for the people of Taron, Mush: the sun wakes up and rises from this lake. If the sun sets in Lake Van for the people of Vaspurakan, then it rises 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 thing, that the depiction of the chariot coming down from the right side of Masis is connected with the pagan sun worship, becomes obvious from the typological comparison of Narekatsi's lay and a Hittite poem, entitled *Sun Hymn* (it is beyond doubt that there is much in common in ancient Armenian and Hittite cultures and particularly in mythology, and if there are doubts, they concern common things leading to the identification of these cultures). Let us quote a part from the Hittite poem *Sun Hymn*:

To the Sun-Man whom all the Gods reject and hate.

You bring the disdained person back to you. You are merciful to him.

You, Sun, protect that man, your serf...

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

The four steeds eat it and that means you will live too, Sun.

Do you listen to me? To man, the serf of yours,

Who utters words in honor to you.

He wants to listen to your words,

O, kingly hero, benefactor Sun.

You cross the four corners of the world with your chariot

To your left all the horrors fly in the sky,

And to your right do all the fears.

The similarity of the images is explicit at first sight. A four-wheeled chariot or carriage is an image typical of ancient myths devoted to sun. In the Hittite poem, it is seeds that are yoked to the chariot while in Narekatsi's ode white oxen are. Both these variants are met 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* too, the ox is the symbol of the patron of spring, agriculture, fruitfulness, i.e. Ara.

Even the compared literary images have much in common in their details: *You cross the four corners of the world with your chariot, to your left all the horrors fly in the sky and to your right do all the fears*, and in Narekatsi's poem—*And to his right, the seraphim with six wings and to his left, the cherubim with many eyes*.

However, in my opinion the most interesting thing is the images of the serfs. Analyzing Narekatsi's ode, M. Mkryan considers the serf as an embodiment of an ordinary peasant, the power of earth is expressed in his image:

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 is despised by gods, he is a cultivator who presents 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 an image connected with the pagan worship of the sun it is still unclear what the connection between this image and the idea of resurrection is.⁶⁷⁶⁷

There is such a plot in the eastern mythology: the god of the sun falls out with the world and leaves it. Everything becomes a chaos. Gods ask him to come back, and he, giving way to man's petition, comes back. There has survived a legend with such a plot about the Hittite death-rebirth god Tilipinu, the god of spring and fruitfulness. There were such legends and stories in Ancient Armenia too. In regard to the folk legend *Mheri Dur* (Mher Door), G. Ghapanyants notes that it

is an ancient legend about the sun god's (Mihra 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 comes down from the right of Masis, i.e. the sun rises from between the Greater and Lesser Masises. Hence, in the Armenian mythology the Masis Mountains were considered an entrance to the underworld from which the spring-bringing sun rises and resurrects. 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.

The most interesting thing in this part 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.

In the epic of Gilgamesh, it is told about the twin mountains Mashu between which there are copper gates, and the one who enters through them never comes out; only the sun does. Let us quote the parts which interest us:

He had heard of the mountains named Mashu

Which guard the sunrise and sunset every day.

Their peaks reach the sky,

Their knees the underworld,

Man-scorpions guard their gates.

Scorpion's appearance is awesome and their look destructive,

Their brightness destroys mountains.

They guard the sun each time when 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 are 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 Mashu,
Pass the woods and mountains fearlessly
And come back safe.
The gates of the mountain are open for you⁷¹.*

Aren't the twin mountains Mashu the Greater and Lesser Masisses from inside of which the sun comes out riding his fiery chariot? Especially as Gilgamesh reaches these mountains after a long journey; crossing rivers, crossing a dark mountain pass which is 2762 meters long, Gilgamesh appears in the Stone orchard which, according to investigators, is the very earthly heaven. Gilgamesh goes 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, for Armenians, the deities of spring, sun and resurrection are merged in the worship of Ara, hence the prince, coming down with his chariot from the right of Masis, is the spring-bringing Sun, Ara who has 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)", comes back, resurrects from the underworld, awakening nature, giving warmth, life, fruitfulness to man. Man, the toiler, brings sun to the world with his cart. This image is of great importance for us. For the Armenians the sun must rise from the right of Masis. And the sun's return depends on man, the cultivator. The color-bringing, spring-bringing sun comes back at man's request and will. It is the peasant who makes the chariot of sun and life move:

He shouted at the oxen,

⁷¹ Poetry of Ancient East (in Armenian).

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 chariot in the above mentioned lay.

I praise the roar of the lion

Which called to the four-winged,

It called to the four-winged

And spread in the underworld.

And the underworld trembled

And shattered because of the roar.

The roar that I hear destroys my castles:

It wants to destroys my castles

And free the prisoners.

Blessed are the prisoners

Who became a trophy for the lion,

They became a trophy for the lion,

And now do not fear of torments,

For crowns await them

And they will be given crowns

By the immortal king lion.

But for the allusion of cross (*Which 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 because 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 death-rebirth deity (hero) was very popular among the pagan Armenians living near Lake Van. That motif has been expressed in folk myth-legends about Ara, Aramazd, Mher in different ways, among which the oldest and the most popular one is the legend about Ara. And 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). Though there are two Mhers in the epic of *Sasna Tsrer* it is, 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" (the one who killed the lion by dividing the lion into two equal parts with his arms). Of course, Mher's being called so is explained in another way in the epic but that 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 is pictured in the form of a man standing on a lion.

The lion is the symbol of sun, power and omnipotence, but in what way is it connected with the idea of resurrection? In Narekatsi's lay, the lion terrifies the whole underworld with its roar, shatters and shakes it, destroys the chains and forts and releases prisoners. This image is, of course, a product of pagan influence and expresses the pagan beliefs about the death-rebirth god's fight against and his victory over the lord of the underworld. This motif with different transformations has survived in almost all the ancient peoples' mythological cultures. For Ancient Egyptians, for instance, it was the mysterious cult of the Sphinx. The Sphinx which thousands of years ago used to be called Shesep-ankh, Hor-emateq, the deity of the rising sun, the one who wins over the darkness, Harmakis (Hor of the heaven), is the symbol of the Egyptian god Hor. Hor (maybe also Har) was worshiped in the Ancient Egyptian religion as one of the sun gods which was gradually merged and identified with the cult of Ra⁷³, the supreme god of the sun. According to the legend, he was Osiris's and Izida's son. Avenging for his father, he won Set, symbolizing the evil, darkness and death, revived his father Osiris and became the

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

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

symbol of resurrection and eternal life. The epithets “winner over darkness”, “deity of the rising sun” given to Sphinx, lion-shaped, lion-like Hor, witness to it.

Babylonians had a god-hero, named Ura about whom it is said: “O, hero, you left the city and entered the palace in the form of a dog, and 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. What is interesting is that there was a deity named Ura in the Urartian gods’ pantheon too: that god had probably 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 the god Ura is 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 images of pagan poetry and they are 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.

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

A New Hypothesis of Grikor 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 covered beneath a veil of religious and doctrinal struggle and tried to reveal Narekatsi as a poet, citizen, thinker and humanist.

S. Poghosyan presents the new hypothesis of Narekatsi's trial in the following way: Narekatsi's free thinking and mysticism became the basis for accusing him of "being a Tondrakite though the poet does not consider himself a one". It is possible that "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 the Kchav monastery but also another work in which he had written his creed". In Poghosyan's opinion, the unity of the Prayers 34, 75, 92, 93 could be that work. According to Poghosyan, "initially theses Prayers comprised a 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 with him a doctrinal work, which, according to Poghosyan, was the unity of the disputable Prayers. According to Poghosyan, it turns out that Ukhtanes wrote his *History of Armenians* at the request

of not Anania but Grigor Narekatsi. And 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 introduces the general atmosphere of the anti-Chalcedonian, anti-sectarian struggle of that era. And in my opinion, this is the main merit of the book. However, in fact, there are not sufficient bases for the new hypothesis, especially as Poghosyan has confined himself only to published literature and has not tried 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 it was not at the request of Anania Narekatsi that Ukhtanes wrote his *History*. Ukhtanes's *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 said 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 in the following way: "Reply to Anania's letter and my promise to fulfill his request". Ukhtanes considers himself as one of his disciples "the most inferior of your disciples or sons doing credit to you" and modestly thinks that "among his many satellites" Anania ordered him to write the *History*, which is "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 takes the year 987 for granted. Well, does Poghosyan think that Grigor Narekatsi, almost 40 at the time, not being the abbot of the Narek monastery, could already have a bishop disciple and he himself be called a "preeminent Vardapet" which means to be the first among Vardapets. Then it is unknown when really Anania Narekatsi wrote his *Confession Letter*. According to this new research, it was addressed not 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 Tondrakians and other sectarians*. Naturally, during these years of acute struggle against Tondrakians and sectarians he would write another work, *Havatarmat*. How it was accepted is another thing.

Speaking of Narekatsi's humanism and mysticism, Poghosyan rightly thinks that "Narekatsi's ideology is mainly of neoplatonic character", that his ideas bear the influence of neoplatonic

emanation, i.e. the outflow of the divine light, that Narekatsi was concerned with that light's way back because the problem of the way of man's happiness is connected with that one. Poghosyan is also right in the description of Narekatsi's mysticism. 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 said that these lays are really connected with folklore, that the reflection of pagan beliefs is explicit in them. Both the lamb as a prey, pigeon and rose derive from pagan beliefs, and Christ himself is a transformation of the pagan death-rebirth deity.

Poghosyan begins the last, the third part of the book in the following way: "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 active life, to a new perception of what is human". Grigor Narekatsi is 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 the historian Ukhtanes met Grigor Narekatsi in Argina in the year 987 on the occasion of the ecclesiastical council convened by king Smbat and Catholicos Khachik Arsharuni, the aim of the council being finding some ways for ending the new persecutions of Armenians in Byzantium dating from the year 986.

It is thus not accidental that besides bishops the council was attended by secular authorities, princes, lords, eminent personages (according to *Haysmavurk*), as in the 10th century the Armenian-Chalcedonian conflicts were not only an external but also an internal threat for the Armenians. Moreover, it was a threat not only for the Armenian Church but also for the united statehood. Councils with such representatives were called at fatal moments. It was a great event though because of some reasons there is no concrete information both in official chronicles and in historiography. Probably Ukhtanes hints at that very council when he writes: "...due to the words, efforts and undertaking of the blessed bishops of the 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 was it possible that the whole religious and secular elite unanimously approved and supported Ukhtanes's undertaking? It could happen only in one case, during the council in Argina where after discussing the main issues, all the people heard Uktanes's case 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.

As to Uktanes's being younger than Grigor and holding a lower office and being less popular, it was really so. First of all, 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 deescalated 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 testifies it) and in this sense, he considered himself his disciple, spiritual son. Probably this is the reason that the great reformer Grigor Narekatsi's and his co-thinker Ukhtanes's names are not even mentioned in Stepanos Asoghik's *History* which ends with the description of the events of the year 1004. Whether it is a result the Catholicos Sargis's ill will towards Grigor

Narekatsi (because that Catholicos ordered Asoghik's *History*) or it was Asoghik's personal attitude, the fact is that in 1004 Grigor Narekatsi was already dead, however even the name of that sun, "shone in the Armenian sky once", is not mentioned in the official historical documents of the time. This fact is not accidental. If we compare some other facts with this one, for instance, that in 1003, shortly after finishing his *Book of Lamentations*, Grigor Narekatsi dies untimely and suddenly, as *Haysmavurk* informs, leaving the implementation of his reformative plans unfinished. In addition, in that very year 1003 there broke out an armed struggle against Tondrakians and other sectarians, the struggle being headed by Vahram Pahlavuni and blessed by Catholicos Sargis. Naturally, persecutions and pursues of the heterodox and the proponents of moderate reformations 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 puts the questions of the relationships of neither God and nature nor nature and mind. The main thing with which Grigor Narekatsi is concerned and which is the axis of his worldview is man's relationship with God”⁷⁵.

It is hard to agree with Chaloyan's opinion because Narekatsi puts the question of the relationship of God and man, as accepted in the Middle Ages. The concept of *Man* is at the same time the symbol of the whole nature in the literary-philosophical system of Narekatsi's views; in this the God-Man relationship is also viewed as God-Nature relationship. Chaloyan himself discovers 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.

V. Chaloyan writes: “In contrast to the Christian religion, Grigor Narekatsi's pantheism consists in the fact 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, one can point to not only the above mentioned words by Narekatsi, referring to the union of man and God in which he equally claims 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. For Narekatsi, God and man are really identical. For instance, in *Ode to Church and Holy Temple* the author develops the idea that the heavenly church descends to earth and becomes an earthly one, and he asks, “Who does the temple resemble?”, and answers that it is 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, etc. like God. This idea which is mentioned indirectly, implicitly comes from Origen. There are cases witnessing to the existence of such ideas in Narekatsi's poem: he believes that the universe is eternal as God is the *renewer of the universe*, that clusters of stars disappear (disperse) but appear again (gather together), that the elements become temporary and reestablish as permanent, that the end of the world is the destruction of THIS visible world and not the whole material one, and that destruction is not a final, an absolute one either, as *the creatures together with all their elements*

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

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 364-365.

will be recreated in new form (Pr. 79, B). Besides, enumerating man's (= nature's) "sins" which are the manifestations of his earthly, physical nature, Narekatsi thinks that they are endless; consequently it directly witnesses to the endlessness and eternity of nature too.

Though the principle of pantheism exists in Narekatsi's poem and the conclusions deriving from it occupy an important place in the system of his views, his philosophical worldview is not confined only to it. The pantheistic orientation is only one of the aspects of that worldview: it is true, a powerful, progressive but only one aspect, in addition not the primary one, and 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 puts the question of their difference: these two origins both coincide and do not coincide in the spheres of their existence. The very thing is that for the great thinker God is not only identical with nature but also is higher than nature or transcendental towards it. If Narekatsi accepted only God's and nature's, God's and man's sameness then man's (man=all material beings, the whole nature) aspiration for God, for absolute perfection would be in vain, this aspiration is the main tendency of Narekatsi's *Book of Lamentations*. The poet writes:

By what measure of weight shall the balance between

the creator and the clay be set?

You remain in these things infinite and unexaminable,

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) are too small in comparison with God's greatness.

Chaloyan writes: "Pantheism is opposed to creationism; the latter rejects the existence of the personal God (anthropomorphism) and the creation of nature by him" (p. 362). However, for Narekatsi God is both personal and finite and impersonal and infinite; in this way anthropomorphism is 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 solves the main philosophical problem from the standpoint of Neoplatonism but displaying some kind of distinctiveness and ability of dialectical thinking. It is manifested in the following: the whole system of Narekatsi's worldview is a chain of negations (an upward, spiral movement) the main concepts of which are '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 writes: "The inner strong dramatic states and the progress of the *Narek* are first of all conditioned by its ideological essence and nature. As a mystic, Narekatsi's greatest purpose is 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 expresses the idea in the poem that Christ 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 tries to reach and join God the more it seems to him that God leaves him, but the more distant God is the stronger becomes the desire to reach him; but this feeling lasts only a second, then he gives up despair: the hope to survive appears again... 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 has been created to suffer and will 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 is that the poet's inner peace does not last long: his emotions and feelings, like the ebb and flow, a violent storm and tranquility of foaming waters, succeed each other, moreover in contrast to this example from nature, they are 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 the belief of reaching happiness push one another like waves, replace one another, and the larger and stronger one becomes the larger and stronger becomes the other.

The dramatic development of the poem is created this way"⁷⁷. This long extract is quoted in order to ground the chain of negations in Narekatsi's views: 1) As opposed to each other, the

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

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 they are differentiated again. 3) Man (nature) is relatively eternal and temporary, infinite and finite to the extent possible by man, and God is absolutely eternal and temporary to the extent possible by God. 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 possible by man (nature), 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).

So man is eternal and temporary not only relatively but also absolutely, 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 mutually determined, are transmuted into each other: during the differentiation the thought (that man is not God, eternal) becomes the cause of stirring up of emotions and inner burning, and these psychological tortures again make Narekatsi go deep into thought 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 becomes the cause of good mood, positive emotions, thus thought becomes the cause of emotion and vice versa.

It should be noted that there is another important fact: Narekatsi or the lyrical hero does not always give way to despair; on the contrary, during one of the phases of differentiation he is pleased with the idea that man is not God. However striking and odd it may seem, it is so. Narekatsi guesses and realizes that to be God means to be deprived of everything that is human and earthly, that to be absolutely eternal means to be absolutely temporary too, that is why he

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 is probably the only medieval thinker who has 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) tried to infer “everything” from the “unity” and again to reduce the first one to the latter. The only exception is Lucretius Carus. He was the first to find out that if one origin derives from another one (everything) and is again reduced to it, in the same way the contrary view can be claimed: the second one can originate from the first one and be reduced to it.

Narekatsi has not only come to the idea of the sameness and difference, transmutation of these two origins (God and nature for Narekatsi) but he has also developed, deepened and enriched its content. For Narekatsi, it is not only an outcome, a conclusion of cognitive search but also a precondition, pre-beginning and pre-principle of that search. This idea has become a special, unique system, a teaching, even if being mainly based on the ideal basis.

By the way, there can arise a question: as these two origins are identical, are transmuted into each other, both of them are the beginning and the end of the other, in what is Narekatsi’s idealism manifested? The thing is that in parallel with the identification of these two origins, Narekatsi differentiates them, and it is during this differentiation that God is admitted as primary and initial, he is 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 touches upon the relationship of God and mind), the cognoscibility of the world, it is handled and is solved by Narekatsi 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 is influenced by the fifth-century philosopher David Anhagt, however Narekatsi’s epistemology is not confined only to it); here Narekatsi’s new and progressive natural or more precisely, natural-philosophical views are manifested. Besides, he finds it also possible to know God directly.

Thus, it should be said in advance that Narekatsi raises and solves ontological and epistemological problems, and it is not accidental that he calls 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. Definition of God

God and his attributes (qualities)

There is no reason to agree with the viewpoint that Narekatsi does 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. He does 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 comes from Neoplatonism, particularly from David Anhaght in the Armenian reality, claiming that the invisible becomes known through the visible, and the unknown through what is known. Consequently, the recognition and confirmation of God’s existence depends on the recognition and confirmation of the existence of nature. As this dependence is both complete and incomplete for Narekatsi, as God and nature are both identical and different, both coincide and do not, then 1) God becomes completely known through knowing nature; through the confirmation of the existence of nature God’s existence is wholly confirmed and 2) God is not wholly known through knowing nature (God is above nature, and nature is his attribute), the confirmation of the existence of nature is the partial confirmation of God’s existence...

Narekatsi grounds the existence of the “true being” with several arguments: the first one which logically comes from the system of his views is that 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 a *guarantor of giving and taking breath (=life-S. P.) without whom there is no movement, no progress* (Pr. 12, B). It should be noted here that without God there is no unity of opposites, no calm, peace to excitement, agitations. That is why Narekatsi considers that every movement is a reminder of God, his existence. He writes:

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

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

and those who 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, but as they are imperfect God's existence is determined by that: *that you might be called God.* (Pr. 46, B)

He grounds God's existence with these and other arguments, but as it is seen from the last one, there is some doubt in this case, especially as he tries to prove that God is not only everything but also nothing, consequently he is not only a true being but also non-being.... Anyway, there is some kind of doubt and the great thinker allows himself a far-going liberalism.

The cognoscibility of God will be touched upon separately. I will just mention here that when reading the *Book of Lamentations* only at first glance does it seem that Narekatsi does not try to define God and his categories because in the beginning the concept of God is clear, immediately given, understandable in itself, having no need of explanations. But in fact, this is an 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. And though this process, the logical development of the notion of God, its growing into a concept, is not wholly comprehended like in Hegel's works, Narekatsi has proceeded from the abstract to the concrete too.

From the very beginning it is clear 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. For Narekatsi, too, God is all-named and is nameless:

*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)*

The Father is the only beginning, the first cause who is himself *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)

The Son proceeds from the Father, as a ray emanating from the paternal light and is eternal; the Spirit proceeds from the Father too. To all appearance, this is the reason that the Father is proclaimed as a Great God, thus it is emphasized that the Father is the cause, the origin, the first cause of the Son and the Spirit. The 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).

In this way the Son and the Spirit are differentiated, separated from the Father, i.e. Narekatsi makes a difference 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.

With you also is your Son, who is like you,

whose hand is strong like yours,

*whose awesome reign is eternal like yours,
whose exaltation is shared with you in your creation.*

*So too 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,
made one by their congruence
and being of the same holy substance and nature,
unconfused and undivided,
one in will and one in action.*

One is not greater, one is not lesser. (Pr. 13, A)

Narekatsi even creates a word to express the trinity: <<թիվ միշտ եզակի, եզեռակի փառք>>-
'always one in number, triune glory'. Here 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).

In this part, it seems that one of the neoplatonic views is rejected indirectly, this view concerning the dependence between the persons (Father→ Son →Spirit), but Narekatsi almost does not reject the dependence; admitting it, he also admits the independence, self-sufficiency, the sameness of persons.

Thus for Narekatsi God has three phases of existence and perception:

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

Expressing the interrelations of the persons, Narekatsi displays antinomic thinking: in relation to the Father, the Son (the Spirit too) both proceeds (comes into existence) and does not, has an origin and cause and does not (self-existent), has not left the Father, is separate, independent and not, is finite and infinite, etc.

“The origin of the Son by fatherhood, and not by priority”, writes Narekatsi. The author is well aware of that the cause is the beginning of the outcome and is prior to it but does not express the idea that the Father is the Son’s origin or is prior to him on purpose (beware of his contemporaries). But it does not mean that he does not admit the difference between the Father and the Son, the Father’s priority over the Son (and the Spirit) or rejects the Son’s dependence on the Father. No. He rejects the view which only admits the dependence, the difference and the Father’s priority over the Son; he admits the view that the Father is prior and is not, is the origin and the contrary (the end), that the Son has an origin, cause and does not (self-existent). This last view of attributing two opposite features to the same thing is expressed in his antinomic judgments, particularly, that the Father is the cause of the Son but is not prior to him. These antinomies are 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, is prior to him; in the case of sameness, as the Son is identical with the Father, the Father is not a cause, an origin for him.

It follows from this that the Son (the Spirit) proceeds from the Father and does not, that he has an origin and does not (self-existent): *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 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 too and meanwhile 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,
without 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, from whom he had never been separated.*

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 does not deny the Son's being alienated, separated, humbled, he is only against acknowledging that separation and admits the unity together with separation—the Son is separated and is not, is offered and is not (*cloaked in blinding light*) returns and does not, is saved and is not.

*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 says, 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, formed everything through them. In the same way the Son and the Spirit depend on the Father as they proceed from the Father, the latter is their "first cause" and meanwhile they are not dependent, are independent, self-existent, *without*

leaving the watchful gaze of the parent of love. It should be also noted here that the Father, God in the first phase of his existence, before the separation of the persons, and before the creation of the heaven and earth, was glorified in his perfection. There is nothing like this expressed in the *Book of Lamentations*, it follows from its judgments that the Father Almighty is the God (creator) of the universe *except the Word..., except the Spirit...*

It is striking but Narekatsi does not spare even the Father Almighty and attributes dependence to him too: *the Father would be diminished*

if he did not have the power of the Word

so too if he did not have the Holy Spirit and

was speechless,

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

But then immediately after saying this, he marks 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

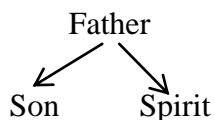
another mortal being.

Similarly the Holy Spirit, if not commissioned

by its cause,

would be vagabond, an unruly wind.

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



at the moment of identification the Son's (the Spirit's) and Father's relationship has a richer content: it is expressed by the persons' mutual dependence and mutual determination. It should be noted here that the mutual determination of the Son and the Spirit is claimed by Narekatsi for the purpose of the later justification of the mutual determination of God and Nature. That is why

Narekatsi puts the stress on the sameness, mutual determination. He does not reject the dependence between the Father and the Son but he rejects the view, the approach which admits only that dependence, separation without admitting their mutual determination, their 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 by nature spiritual,
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 is both incorporeal and corporal (material) for Narekatsi, it comes from the logic of the sublation of the sameness and difference of God and nature (man). Narekatsi comes to this idea indirectly. He begins 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 would not avoid these questions, he showed his attitude towards them. And really, as an outcome of the Armenian Christian environment, he is the proponent of Monophysitism, but his approach is not confined only to it. Narekatsi displays uniqueness in these issues too, following the general logic of his views. He seems to synthesize these two viewpoints, of course, admitting Monophysitism as the primary one. First, it should be said that this issue as all religious-Christian dogmas are of wider theoretical-philosophical importance for him; it has exceeded dogmatic bounds and become closely tied to the main issues of ontology, becoming a type of the latter. The Son's being Monophysite or Dyophysite expresses the relationship, sameness and difference of the two beginnings, the spiritual and physical (God and nature (=man), divine and human. Narekatsi does not reject the difference and the sameness of the divine and human natures, he is only against the view that the divine and human natures are only different or only identical (united). In the first case he rejects the Dyophysitism, according to which God has two different natures (divine and human), and in the second case the Monophysitism (according to which the Son has only one nature, as the human nature is identical with the divine one, so the Son has only one nature) separately and supports the two of them together as he admits the difference and the sameness of the divine and the human natures simultaneously. More exactly, Narekatsi does not concentrate on one of the views, regarding only one of them as a final truth; he tries to show the incompleteness of each through sublations. His ultimate aim is the chain of the endless sublations of opposite and common viewpoints (judgments, concepts), of sameness (unity) and difference, divine and human, God and nature (man), the incorporeal and corporal; during these sublations the rich content of that endless truth (sublated on the basis of idealism) is revealed. Only on the basis of this is it possible to realize why Narekatsi claims that the Son 1) is God, is not man, 2) is God and man, 3) is absolutely God and man, 4) is absolutely and relatively God and man (i.e. he is God and man not only divinely but also humanly, to the extent possible by man, as God is almighty...). The unity of these opposite viewpoints, the unique solution of the issue of Dyophysitism and Monophysitism by Narekatsi is discovered only on the basis of his entire ontological teaching.

Thus, Narekatsi admits that the Son is incorporeal and corporal. What is striking is that Narekatsi indirectly contradicts 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 writes:

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

The incarnate Son *does not exist in time*, i.e. he became human outside of time which for Narekatsi means 1) absolutely finite, 2) absolutely infinite, eternal. Accordingly, the Son is also eternally corporal: this corresponds to Narekatsi's essence completely. The Son is incorporeal and corporal outside of time and from the beginning. The Son is formed from an incorruptible mixture and is unchangeable and inseparable (united). In this way, Narekatsi lays the foundation for the conclusion that nature is identical with God, consequently it is eternal (timeless), unchangeable and united. But before that conclusion there is a chain of judgments (concerning that conclusion): if the Son as incarnate God is eternal and unchangeable then it refers to the whole Godhead as in the case of the sameness a feature attributed to one of the persons refers to the others, to the Trinity, 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 always offered and yet remains whole, who is all in everyone and complete in all things...* (Pr. 47, B). Narekatsi views the unity of diversity in God and calls him so: *who are all in all through all.* (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. If as an impersonal origin he is infinite, unlimited then he is finite, limited as a personal origin: *I fled from the balancing bounds*

of your will. If in the first case while 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 attributes 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 admits that God is devoid of space while nature is 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 *in the substance of of existence unto the ends of the earth.* God has his own place (*God withdrawing in anger, returns in mercy*) and does not have. In the case of identification with any separate, temporal, relative being, God is also endowed with a relatively limited and unlimited space. The thing that any individual being is a relatively finite and infinite space is obvious from the fact that man's finiteness is relative, that man is relative, whole too, has everything in him and he is in everything but to the extent possible by man, 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) occupies a certain (limited) space, is within a certain space and is not, is "here" and is "not here"⁷⁸.

Time. God's reign is timeless. By timeless Narekatsi understands 1) eternal, absolutely infinite time, duration including present, past and future; 2) at the same time absolutely infinite time, duration, i.e. absence of time, timelessness. Thus in one case time is not viewed as God's attribute (time did not exist: *present non-existent* and God created it: *setting time in motion and all that has taken shape as time unfolds*; in another case time is viewed as a universal attribute and as a such is uncreated. The same refers to space and motion.

Narekatsi always says that God is eternal and suddenly writes in Prayer 84 that he lasts as long as a short duration of a feeling (զգայութիւն տևողութիւն); is God such a short duration? It is then not accidental that according to the *Book of Lamentations*, God does not need time to create

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

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? In my opinion yes because first God is 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) are in his accounting.

For Narekatsi the concepts of structure and non-structure correspond to controversiality and non-controversiality.

In the first phase of differentiation, nature (man) is considered controversial, structural and God non-controversial, non-structural; in the phase of identification, both nature and God are structural and non-structural. Then they are again differentiated: God is endowed with these attributes to the extent possible by him, absolutely, while nature (man) - relatively and in the next identification phase both of them are structural and non-structural both absolutely and relatively.

God, as a supreme being, has all beings in him. So when it is said *ruler of all* it is understood 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. In this case 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.

What kind is God's absolute, infinite, eternal structure? Narekatsi displays a quite 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 diminishes (changes) and does not. In Prayer 46 Narekatsi asks in whose image man was created and answers in God's image, then speaks of man's structure and interconnection of his attributes:

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...

*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 the image of these things is engraved on you
as on an uneraseable monument, wretched soul of mine,
so that 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.*

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

*Like the yoke that mediates between the great
and the lowly,
the assembled body
established in the name of Christ is sometimes impaired,
as with the cutting off or loss of an unruly organ,
infecting the body.*

*Something is lost in your mortal structure,
feeling abode of mankind,
and the usual shape of the person undergoes
some disfigurement.
And now when the uniquely miraculous structure
in the living image of God,
is completely condemned, my enslaved soul,
that original likeness is stolen from you as
by breaking the law in the Garden of Eden.
But by the light of the baptismal font
the breath of the Holy Spirit is received and
the image is restored to God's likeness. (C)*

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 *disfigurment*, i.e. God's structure will diminish. But at the same time Narekatsi claims that *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 strictly, absolutely dependent on (determined by, subject to) one another (all) and are not.

In God's structure all beings (components), the large and small, the whole and 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 necessary to touch upon Narekatsi's views on the interrelation of the whole and part. In this concern, he has developed ancient thinkers' principle "all in all". God is absolutely and relatively part and whole, so is 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 whole and whole is in part, whole is in whole: in this way the transmutation, mutual determination, sameness and difference are reached. It is easy to say: part and whole are identical and different, are transmuted into each other; 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 are in God's accounting. It has already been said that all are identical at the level of God's structure: *ruler of all equally; you are the sum of all infinities, the solid is fluid for you, and the fluid 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 for every being God (the Supreme Being encompassing and ruling over all, the unity of all) is an unreachable distance (=absolute – S. P.) and immediate closeness (absolutely immediate- S. P.). 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 immediately God's component), 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 matter) → four elements → abundance of inanimate beings → animate beings → irrational beings ("soul of animals", i.e. animals which are irrational by nature) → rational animal, i.e. Man.

Of course, it is to dwell here 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 was said that God is controversial and non-controversial, more precisely a unity of opposites. It particularly concerns the Trinity (the whole Godhead). At the moment of Trinity *the persons, separate faces, unique and distinct are made one by their congruence* and as such God is a *felicitous balance and equality*. Speaking of man's controversial nature, Narekatsi writes 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 means that the Father Almighty unites in himself the Son and the Spirit as his eternal, absolute opposites, especially as the Father is the origin of both of them; coming and deriving from the Father, the Son and the Spirit do not move away from him, always stay in the Father's embrace.

Movement and rest. From the very beginning, Narekatsi attributes rest and movement, non-changeability and changeability to God, *undisturbable calm, indelible seal, undeceiving call, sincere course*. Rest and non-changeability are, of course, initial, primary in his system; they are classified as "positive" qualities and movement and change as "negative". While defining God, Narekatsi deduces the "negative" features from the "positive" ones and does the contrary while defining man (nature). Through some efforts of dialectical thinking Narekatsi deduces, claims that God also moves and changes.

In the phase of differentiation of God and man, God is calm, unchangeable and nature moves, changes but already in the next, identification phase he claims that as God and nature are identical then both nature and God have the same qualities, i.e. both of them move, are immovable, unchangeable. God's movement and changeability is deduced in another way too: Narekatsi regards 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 comes to the sameness of existence and non-existence, he comes to the sameness of movement and rest; so God is both movable and calm. Besides, as God is *almighty* he ought to be also movable or he will lose the status of *almightiness*.

However, Narekatsi does not concentrate on that phase of sameness and sublates it again by difference if he attributes movement and change to God, he thinks that these differ 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 both nature and God are attributed with absolute and relative movement and rest, God is identical with nature and any individual being (God is in everything, in every part), consequently in this phase any relative, temporary, private movement is identified with absolute, permanent, universal movement. Our every movement is the reminder of God.

2. Nature

Nature and its attributes

The sameness and difference of God and nature has already been mentioned. If on the basis of that sameness and difference Narekatsi deduces “positive” attributes from negative ones while defining God’s qualities, then he treats 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, nature is attributed with limited, finite space. As such, nature is caused, created (by God) but in the phase of sameness nature is attributed with unlimited, infinite, endless space. That is why nature is both limited, has boundaries (*the ends of the earth* (Pr. 41, B)) and is meanwhile endless, the Universe. The unlimited space is not 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 next, differentiation phase, the unlimited and limited space of nature is viewed as relative and that of God as absolute, and again the question of dependence is raised, however in the phase of sameness, the space of nature is viewed as both absolutely and relatively unlimited and limited (it should be noted that limited space is not only caused, created but also uncreated and uncaused like the unlimited space).

Thus, for Narekatsi space is also controversial and non-controversial. It is finite and infinite, limited and unlimited, bounded and endless; moreover, the dialectics of the opposition of finiteness and infinity is more deepened by Narekatsi, displaying sameness and difference, opposition and unity. The absolute finite and infinite contradicts to, is different from the relative finite and infinite but is meanwhile united and identical with it. A very deep and interesting idea is manifested here: every finite being (including man) is finite not only in space, has limited space but is also infinite, unlimited (*I in all, and all in me* (Pr. 72, C)), furthermore he is not only relatively limited and unlimited 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) are 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 is developed in the same way. In the phase of differentiation, nature has finite time and, as such, time is created, but in the phase of identification, nature is attributed with infinite, endless time, which is viewed as a uncreated, 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, or it has no direction or it is the same as being reversible and irreversible. By time Narekatsi means irreversible time, relatively finite and infinite time. It is obvious from the following: *setting time in motion and all that has taken shape as time unfolds* (Prayer 34, C). And by *timeless* he means absolutely finite and infinite time, reversible time, eternity where the past, present and future are identical. The reversibility and renewal of time is realized together with the reversibility and renewal of nature. Narekatsi states that God is the renewal of the Universe, hence that renewal is eternal, absolutely reversible, as God himself is that renewal. And really as nature is not only different from but 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 an absolutely irreversible and finite time and 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 so, is dependent on the universal being, Nature=God (absolutely reversible and irreversible time), is its constituent part, but is also identical with it, i.e. it is also absolute, and the finite time is also infinite, eternal. Narekatsi says: *the present is non-existent*. The author treats that *non-existent* dialectically: it is not only utmost finiteness but also such 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 has 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, changeable and God's structure is infinite, unlimited, eternal, unchangeable. Then follows the differentiation: the structure of nature is viewed as relative and that of God as absolute, and only in the phase of identification are they 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 irrational beings; these are higher than other animate beings, the latter higher than inanimate beings, these are higher than the primordial matter (nothing which is beyond 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, no determination among beings (although later it will be said that there is determination, dependence in the case of sameness too, in that case, though all beings are identical they originate from one another. An interesting conclusion: a thing originates from 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.

It should not be forgotten that directness and indirectness, hierarchy and non-hierarchy, determination and indetermination are both absolute and relative.

Creation of the world

Out of what was nature created? 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 says all the time that all beings, everything is created out of nothing (non-being, non-quality, non-quantity). So the world has been created out of nothing, it is identical with God, and ought to be in God's accounting (everything (consequently, nothing – S. P.) is in God's accounting). It is also confirmed by the fact that Narekatsi recognizes two substances, God and the world, though one of them is the primary, the other is secondary. If “nothing” is different from the world, then it is identical with God or else “nothing” will be considered a third substance, which is unacceptable. So the world was created from God, “nothing”. Now it is clear why Narekatsi describes the process of God's incarnation, self-alienation this way: *You were defined, boundless one. You were measured, unexaminable one. You focused light, radiant one. You became human, incorporeal one* (Pr. 34, M). Narekatsi develops the Areopagite principle “God is everything and nothing” in an indirect way, not explicitly. The world comes forth from God: *everything is from you* (Pr. 4, D). God is not only the “nothing” out of which nature, the whole material diversity, all were created but also

“everything” (*nowhere, yet without you there are no bounds* (Pr. 23, A)) out of which all and the whole world came into existence.

As identical with God, nature is limited, absolute. Its origination is absolute too, consequently nature is self-existent, and the thing, out of which the world (all) comes into being, is created, is in the world, is identical with it; nature is created out of itself. Nature, the world as absolute, limited, as everything, is created out of “everything”. And as “nothing” is not different from the absolute, limited nature but is “in its accounting”, is also “in the accounting” of “everything”, consequently nature comes forth from itself, from “nothing”.

In short, Narekatsi leads to the following idea: nature as “everything” and “nothing” comes forth from itself and God as such.

How was the world created?

God, in general, as well as each one 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 is created finitely, directly, immediately, 2) on the other hand, infinitely, indirectly. Narekatsi states that God has created *all through Word* and in accordance with the neoplatonic tradition, by this he means the identification of the creation of the world with God’s Word, the incarnation of the Son. As it is seen, Narekatsi has displayed some kind of regularity in this matter, combining the viewpoints on the finiteness and infinity of God’s Word. He consistently assigns the same to the creation of the world.

To want means being able to for God: *as much as you want, you can do* (Pr. 31, A), and being able to do something means to want: *For you everything is possible. Especially 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). That is why God wished and created, said once and established the whole universe with his concise word. There is no duration of time between God’s word and his work. God required 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). In this case, God has said and has 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, part and 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 solid* (Pr. 53, A), the inanimate is animate and the animate is inanimate. Whatever changes take place in that diversity, all the same that all will remain unchanged for God, a treasure created by him at once.

In Narekatsi's *Book of Lamentations*, more attention is paid to the direct and indirect creation of the world.

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

You humbled yourself, exalted one.

You became meek, awesome one.

You were revealed, Lord beyond words.

You were defined, boundless one.

You were measured, unexaminable one.

You focused light, radiant one.

You became human, 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 always offered and yet remains whole, who is sacrificed continuously upon innumerable altars without being consumed, who is all in everyone and complete in all things... that all may be collected in the same body with him as head* (Pr. 47, B). Thus, the world comes into being due to the self-creation of God's Word (in this case nature is not a being outside of God but is in God's "accounts" (*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 *renewer 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 infinity of the 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: it is the Son's (God's Word's) boundless procession from the Father. Narekatsi tried to ground the limitlessness of God's Word in this or that way, only for the reason of having a basis for the further deduction of the limitlessness of the origination of the world. There are no casual judgments in the *Book of Lamentations*, everything is considered in advance. The infinity of the origination is grounded indirectly too. Everything is in God's accounting. There is *no movement, no progress* without God. That is why *every movement is a reminder of God* (Pr. 31, C) It is confirmed by the lines of the Prayer 54:

*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 without a scheduler,
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, doer of good.*

In order to take place every one of the infinite number of movements and phenomena in the universe need God's order, his hint, so God orders, hints all the time in order to set all the phenomena in the world in motion, to realize them. Isn't God's Word not only finite, concise but also infinite? *You seek my return to you, but 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. In this case, Narekatsi displays the competence of the natural-philosophical achievements of his time and sometimes puts forward his own audacious ideas.

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

First of all, let us consider Narekatsi's views on the nature of light. The author differentiates the natural, corporal light from the divine, heavenly, incorporeal light. More precisely, Narekatsi, as a poet-thinker, makes use of the words "light" and "ray" in two senses, direct and figurative. In the first sense (direct) light is used in its direct meaning, e.g. sunlight, in the second one, it is used for the purpose of making the divine, incorporeal, intangible existence definite and "visible". The thing that Narekatsi regards light as corporal is obvious from the fact that he considers God as light, a ray without shadow or shadowless sun, a sun that does not set. The natural light, for instance, sunlight, touching objects, casts 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 put shadow on them.

Besides, the source of the natural light, for instance the Sun, is material, is from air, so light is corporal too. Moreover, the speed of the natural light is a definite duration, though short, little, but anyway a 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 is not accidental that Narekatsi considers light material. Among the Armenian thinkers, he had such an authoritative predecessor as Eznik Koghbatsi. The celebrated thinker of the fifth century claimed: "It is to be noted from the beginning that what is touched, influenced or examined by

senses is corporal, and what does not have influence on senses is incorporeal. The element of light which is visible is corporal, likewise air, the coolness of which affects body, is corporal, and fire, the heat of which affects body, is corporal too".

One more fact: Narekatsi said that God created light out of nothing. It is clear that he means the creation of the corporal light because the creation of the heavenly, divine light, light as God's property, out of nothing is out of the question.

Thus, the material light, the first ring of the hierarchy of the whole material diversity comes forth from nothing. The other rings descend from the first one, from light.

Though it is said that the other rings of the hierarchy, for instance the four elements, inanimate beings or the rational being, Man, come forth from nothing too, this procession is indirect while the direct one is the procession of four elements from light and the whole diversity of inanimate and animate beings from them. 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 in a somewhat changed way, adjusting it to the logic of the system of his existential views. Thus, Narekatsi considers not "heat", "coolness", "dryness" and "humidity" as the distinctive features of the four elements but "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 is not a mere poetic self-will: he does it consciously, believing that soil, with its weight and heaviness, downwardness is opposed to the weightlessness, the upward movement of air, and water, with its coolness and non-humidity, is opposed to (overcomes) the heat of fire. In short, Narekatsi thinks that these features express the essences, oppositions and transmutation of the four elements better. He does not accept the indelibility of the four elements. According to him, they originate from light (and become light again) and then develop and transmute into one another.

For the medieval thinker the question of the emergence of the whole material diversity is connected with the issue of the relationship of the heaven and the earth. First, the author differentiates the heaven and the earth as symbols of the non-material and material respectively. In this case, the heavenly hierarchy precedes and determines the earthly hierarchy. This idea was poetically embodied in *Ode to Church and Holy Temple*. Then the heaven is viewed as material too and as such identical and united with the earth. The unity of the heaven and earth, as a unity of corporals, is preceded by the divine (incorporeal) existence. In relation to God's incorporeal essence (for God), the heaven and earth, as corporal, identical, are united, consequently they

have emerged simultaneously while in the frames of the relationship of “the heaven (corporal) and earth” first the emergence of the heaven is mentioned, then that of the earth. The heaven with its luminaries comes into existence directly from nothing (...stars...you called them into existence from nothing) and the earth comes forth from the mass floating in the universe.

In the mediaeval Armenian thought there dominated Aristotle’s view according to which the heaven and earth did not come forth from the same substance (or from the same elements), and that the heaven originates from such an element which is pure, unmixed, devoid of opposites, unchangeable and eternal. By this perhaps, Ptolemy’s heavenly mechanism about the non-changeability and indestructibility of the heavens is grounded; that mechanism was adopted by Christianity. The fourteenth-century great Armenian philosopher Hovhan Vorotnetsi supports Aristotle’s viewpoint. In this concern G. Grigoryan writes: “Vorotnetsi gives also Aristotle’s justification of why “heavenly bodies are of a different substance” Aristotle grounds 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 comes forth 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 have such an aspiration: it seems they try to become free from the form in which they have embodied and transform into a new one. This process is permanent; on the basis of it the old is destroyed and the new is created, something that is not viewed in the heaven.

Narekatsi’s non-standard thinking cannot 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 is an overall 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 would not be subject to change and degradation is inadmissible. So the heaven, with its luminaries, is subject to qualitative changes and even to degradation. According to Narekatsi, the heaven and earth are 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:

At the time when the heavens will be rolled up like a scroll

and the earth will be to its very foundations,

and billowing waves of the tempestuous sea,

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 at that time:

then the heavens will be cleared in purity

and the creatures together with all their elements

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

And at last perhaps the most important thing: Narekatsi denies the image of the unchangeable heavens. Heavenly bodies change, are corrupted 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 touches upon the change of the surface of the earth. According to him, the landscape of the earth is 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 then all the material diversity came into existence.

Return, salvation of Nature (the World)

Return is one of the notions of Gr. Narekatsi's teachings. Other notions such as "salvation, forgiveness, atonement, renewal, healing, recompletion, restoration, reestablishment" and others are ranked together with return; Narekatsi has given a deeper meaning to them than the mediaeval perceptions of these 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, is included in that inheritance or not. Of course, for Narekatsi the most important, the main thing is Man's return, salvation and renewal but it does not mean that Narekatsi has not touched upon the issue of the return of the whole nature. The great thinker does not betray himself in this matter too. If he speaks of nature then he speaks of its return too and if he confirms that nature does not return, simultaneously he mentions its ability to return. And really, Narekatsi proclaims God as "the renewer of the universe". This judgment occupies an important place in the system of the great thinker's views. It has a deep content: it follows from this judgment that God and nature are identical because God is the renewer and existence of nature. Evidently, the renewal (recompletion) of the Universe is a kind of return, salvation.

Narekatsi speaks of 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 requires no time for expiating the piles of sins of the whole Universe. Narekatsi emphasizes continually that God is a complete salvation and saves everyone, even the most evil, makes all return to him, even inanimate and irrational beings:

You who gather and scatter the speechless constellations,

like a flock of sheep, symbolic of the hope

of life that you, Lord, with your sweet providence

dispense in your abundant mercy

even to the slow of tongue who do not petition you. (Pr. 63, B)

Narekatsi thinks of not only the renewal, recompletion of the whole Universe but also the recompletion of beings and objects subject to degradation, 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: when Narekatsi speaks of Man's salvation, renewal it should be understood in three ways: the salvation of man as an individual, of man-kind and the whole material. The thing that man's salvation is 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 were created for man, 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 speaks also 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 of is the return to the Father's embrace.

So Narekatsi not think of the return of Nature alone: the multisided analysis of this matter comprises an important part, section, layer, of the concept of the overall salvation of his philosophical teaching.

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

And though all rewards may be yours,

so too is all mercy,

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

for while the first brings glory, the second merely

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 directly:

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

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

For the power to restore what is worn-out to

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

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

Let us recall once more that if creation is the way of the differentiation of Nature from God, its alienation (opposition), then its return is the contrary, the way of identification, unification (unity). It is this that justifies Narekatsi's deliberateness of ranking the return higher than creation as the great humanist is more concerned not with the difference and opposition of God and Nature but with their sameness and unity, which brings him to the idea of the sameness and unity of God and Man. Finally, there comes 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 Man's salvation, return, renewal, recompletion. The second Lusavorich (Illuminator) considers that the secret of happiness and eternity to be in this.

In general, Narekatsi sublates the differentiation and controversy of any opposition by the unity of opposites of those opposite features (notions). And he manages to do it due to the thing that in each of opposite features he discovers its opposite; due to it the desired transmutation, unity, sameness of opposites and opposite features is “achieved”. Thus in Prayer 31 he marks:

For sometimes in the midst of black crows

one sees a flock of white doves,

*and in the middle of wild, unkempt horses,
will be a tame sheep,
in the midst of beastly dogs, 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 reconciliation amid hostility (unity amid opposition). In Prayer 32, the poet turns 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 are in God's accounting, all are subject to return, to salvation without exception. That is why Narekatsi puts the question of "*How did the follower become alienated?*" but also how the exiled, alienated can return, join, unite and become the same.

* * *

Grigor Narekatsi tries 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 analyses 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 the salvation and renewal of Nature and the Universe, and Nature is the object. Thus from the beginning we deal with the differentiation of 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 to, saves and renews itself with its cycling and its progress. 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, *without whom there is no movement, no progress:*

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 without a scheduler,

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

except at the pleasure of your commandments,

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

Thus the ultimate, absolute cause of floating clouds, the sun coursing through the zodiac is God. But the mentioned movements 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 besides its absolute, ultimate cause has its relative cause. And it is Nature itself that is endowed with immanent movement, 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, God. The purpose of that aspiration-progress, return, salvation and renewal is to survive, eternalize, immortalize. This is the ultimate purpose of the return. But as Nature is identical with God, Nature is the beginning and the end, the ultimate purpose, absolute perfection of all material beings, consequently all beings, their unity, Nature strive for the Nature itself.

Thus, the return of Nature is purposeful and is an end in itself. Both the creation and return as movement, change (development) have an aim (or consequence) and are aimless: they have no purpose or are an end in themselves, likewise the creation and return have a cause and do not (or are self-caused). The notion of “aimless or end in themselves” has a deep content too. The thing that the return of Nature is an end in itself witnesses to the sameness of God and Nature (Universe), of their being self-caused and of their eternity. These two origins change permanently, transmute into each other, remaining unchanged. Grigor Narekatsi is the unique thinker of the Middle Ages who has come to the idea of the transmutation, mutual determination of these two opposite substances, of being a beginning and end for each other, thereby being united and identical. Thus the creation is the way (process) of God's and Nature's difference and opposition, 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, Nature; he creates himself. 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 distinguishes two generalized means of both the creation and return: word and work (the hand symbolizes, implies 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 cycle of natural phenomena, the whole material diversity which takes a 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 is so only at first glance; in fact Narekatsi has its justification. According to our philosopher, the return (salvation) is regarded as "recreation", consequently the creation should be viewed as a re-return, re-salvation. This kind of identification of the creation and return determine the following judgments:

You, who are more enriched by giving than receiving.

Your treasure increases more by sharing than gathering.

Your estate grows more by disbursing than collecting.

Your stores pile up more by distributing than 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, spreading. But as everything is in God's *accounting* the things scattered, distributed, spread by God do not come out of the boundaries of his *accounting*, remain in his *accounting* that is why 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 comes to the transmutation and unity of diametrically opposite notions almost in any case. Likewise the return is 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 the transmutations of homogeneity (primordial matter or nothing).

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

and the earth will be shaken to its very foundations,

and billowing waves of the tempestuous sea,

pursue each other, crash against each other...

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 at that time.

However, we already know that the return is not only salvation but also renewal, recompletion, recreation. In the case of 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, are opposite to each other, form a unity transmuting into each other. By becoming smooth, melting, taking fire, the material diversity becomes homogeneity, but the cycling, the progress, the existence of the Universe is not over by that, simultaneously the opposite process takes place: the transition from the homogeneity to diversity:

the heavens will be cleared in purity
and the creatures together with all their elements
will be recreated in new form (Prayer 79, B).

Narekatsi says that opposites have 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 a balanced way.

I can be objected that Gr. Narekatsi did not say such things concretely but doesn't everyone know to whom the direct words are directed? (To a fool). Doesn't Narekatsi teach us that there is white amid black, good amid evil, truth amid lies, lowly amid 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") then diversity and "every" are out of the question. 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 of universal scales;
in other circumstances he might be
the creator of the Theory of Relativity.*

Grigor Gurzadyan

B. Book of Knowledge

1. Epistemology

Narekatsi goes deep into epistemological issues as far as they concern the solution of the problem of man: in order to change the world and man for the better, kinder and perfect him first it is necessary to know them. Without trying to define epistemology (it is considered clear in itself), Narekatsi raises and uniquely solves the main problems related to knowledge—the question of knowing the world (being in general) and man, the question of the interrelation of the absolute and relative knowledge, the "faith-knowledge" interrelation, the revelation of human knowledge, etc. The elucidation and solutions of all these questions comprise a consistent system, Narekatsi's theory of knowledge, which is closely connected with his system of ontological views and is deeply influenced by Neoplatonism too.

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

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 calls human head “chandelier, peak of wisdom”.

Narekatsi distinguishes 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 breathing being

let alone one capable of spiritual, thoughtful life. (Pr. 21, D)

Narekatsi distinguishes 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 to the living beings and thought for the rational being* (Prayer 44, C). Thus man’s soul, endowed with intellect, is viewed in general as an autonomous, a relatively “developed” form of metaphysical existence of the soul; it is closer to God’s soul as regards its perfection. Thus dependence, as regards the scale of perfection, is 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 draws deep lines between the human and divine intellectual abilities, as accepted in the Middle Ages, then this difference is sublated by their sameness.

Considering the problem of epistemology, Narekatsi puts and uniquely solves 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—in the very solution of which the differences and similarities of the divine knowledge and human knowledge are manifested.

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 knowledge 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, which 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 possible by man” 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, saint’s *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 these concepts, thereby developing and enriching their content. Thus, Narekatsi wants perfection (and considers it possible and real) not only to the utmost extent possible by man but also to the extent of God’s omnipotence, accordingly man is all-knowing, all-seeing like God absolutely and divinely. But the thing is that this phase is sublated with a new phase of difference, and it becomes clear that the absoluteness of man’s knowledge is relative, limited (or potential) while God’s knowledge is absolute, limitless (or actual).

The sameness and difference, mutual determination of reality and knowledge. Narekatsi thought that the divine knowledge is identical with the reality and the human one is 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. Neoplatonic traditions are manifested here: *you*

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

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 58.

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,

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 intellective abilities as, according to our 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. Thus again a deep line is drawn between man's and god's intellective abilities though both of them are identical with and different from the reality, one is absolutely, the other relatively, one actually, the other potentially, to the extents possible by them; 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 and there is some 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 possible by it, relatively.

God's Word is absolutely incorporeal and consequently is absolutely different from the whole physical world, but for Narekatsi different things are also identical, absolutely different things are also absolutely identical. So the whole material diversity is the God's Word, though incarnate but God's Word anyway. And at man's level the sameness and difference of thought and reality, the transmutation of thought and reality, of the subjective and objective beginnings is relative, 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 intellectual 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 possible by man, relatively; the same is with man's knowledge.

What is striking and amazing is Narekatsi's dialectics of the objective and subjective of the sameness and difference; though this dialectics is based on idealism (Narekatsi's idealism consists in the fact that in the phase of differentiation the subjective origin is considered primary and superior), however it is almost a special, a unique historical experience.

Narekatsi exaggerates even in the matters of identifying word and work, knowledge and reality, yielding to mysticism. That principle brings him to the illusion that the spiritual-mental experience, self-cleansing in one's mind, ennobling in one's imagination are real. He fetishizes word: according to him even one word can be decisive, can become a way out for salvation: *Indeed this "I have sinned" is a blessed phrase in this Prayer for the heart set on hope. ...bridge of life, pleasing to Heaven, ...shield against hardship... victorious creative force, mighty abyss, terrifying separation, transcending art... (Pr. 27, C). But it is a yielding to poetical maximalism and is sublated soon: 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 does not concentrate on one of the phases of the differentiation and identification and accept it as a final truth; the continuity of the process of the sublation is the most important for him.*

The relationship of God's and man's cognitions in relation to the reality is not settled by this. Making use of the same logic the author raises the problem of the knowledge determined and not determined by reality:

Differentiation:

The divine knowledge determines reality,

The human knowledge is determined by reality.

Identification:

The divine knowledge determines and is determined by reality.

So is the human knowledge.

Differentiation:

The divine knowledge determines and is determined by reality absolutely.

The human knowledge determines and is determined by reality relatively.

Identification:

The divine knowledge determines and is determined by reality absolutely and relatively.

So is the human knowledge.

The divine knowledge is self-caused, self-existent. God's knowledge exists itself and is not determined by anything; it precedes reality: *You who know everything before they happen*. Man's knowledge is determined 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, precedes it and the world of objects but is also determined by it. This idea deviates from the Christian Orthodoxy and Narekatsi transmits 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 shows God's Word's determination 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 fact was interpreted differently in the middle Ages: God endured earthly tortures and

overcame it to restore people's faith, to show them God's omnipotence, but Narekatsi claims the contrary: it was done for God to make sure, to know people's miserable and helpless existence and become merciful.

In epistemology Narekatsi's idea of the determination and non-determination of God's knowledge by reality (the determination of reality by knowledge) or in other words the mutual determination of knowledge and reality comes from the justification of the idea of the mutual determination of God (the Son of God, God's Word) and reality in ontology. The Holy Mother of God, symbolizing the whole material world, is 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* for Mary, *a breathing Eden*.

Human knowledge too is not only determined 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 mind. Due to his intellect man changes the reality, and as such, man is proclaimed as Creator, God. The author pays special attention to the foreseeing mind. In general foreseeing is viewed as the main feature of God's knowledge as it precedes reality:

Before I was, 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 is attributed to human knowledge too. With the feature of the creative reflection of the reality, human knowledge is identical with the divine knowledge. Narekatsi emphasizes that man is able to identify phenomena, not existent in the reality yet but emerging in 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 for the Divinity,
reminding me of what awaits me in the next life, these 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 determined by the reality but also determines 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 become adjusted to the reality or to change it.

This phase of identification is, however, sublated by the next differentiation of God's knowledge and man's knowledge. God's knowledge is absolutely determined and not determined by the reality to the "extent" possible by God; human knowledge is determined relatively, to the "extent" possible by man. This means that nothing happens in the world of objects without God's awareness of it, without God's Word and "hint", that God knows everything in advance absolutely, before everything happens. The world of objects is absolutely determined by the world of ideas and vice versa, i.e. God's Word, knowledge is absolutely determined 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 everything absolutely and simultaneously does not know, that reality is absolutely determined by God's Word and is absolutely not determined, that his knowledge is absolutely independent from reality and is simultaneously absolutely determined 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 man's knowledge, the principle of the mutual determination of reality and man's knowledge is concretized a little in this phase. It becomes clear that man's knowledge is

relatively determined by the world of objects, accordingly it determines reality relatively. For instance, in case of such an intellective 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 relatively. God's foreseeing is not a result of some intellective process like that of 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 planted as a reminder here in my body

the token of that first curse,

that through this small insignificant speck the larger

illness might be examined. (Pr. 69, A)

Man cannot foresee everything at a time absolutely.

The difference and sameness of God's and man's intellective abilities are manifested not only in the determination and no-determination of knowledge by reality but also in their limitedness and limitlessness (finiteness and infinity), indelibility and removability, structure (hierarchic and homogeneous), etc.

First, it should be noted that while considering the question of the "divine" knowledge, Narekatsi touches upon almost the same categories as in the case of uncovering the "divine" existence and defining God. It is accounted for by the fact that the divine existence and knowledge are first of all identical for him, consequently God's Word, knowledge, is of the same nature as the divine existence. Qualities, attributed to the first, are attributed to knowledge too. Only the attribute of "space" can give rise to doubt: Narekatsi attributes it to God's existence but it should not be forgotten that that attribute is assigned to the incarnate God or to God's incarnate (materialized) state of existence, so that whatever 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, man's knowledge is temporary. Naturally, preference is given to the divine knowledge which has no limit as to time, it is free from the timescale of past-present-future and this knowledge is unchangeable in relation to time while man's knowledge changes in course of time. From the point of view of time God's and man's intellectual abilities are not only different but also identical, they 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 creates the concept "անժամանակ" (outside of time, timeless) which has two meanings, implying both finite and infinite time. In the next phase of differentiation God's knowledge is attributed with absolutely and man's knowledge with relatively finite and infinite time. 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, he is a *bold vision who creates everything:*

What is beyond my reach was put there by you.

What is hidden from me in my fallen state

is within view for your beatitude.

What is incalculable for me is already 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 learned from the ontology that God's creation is finite and infinite. Proceeding from the sameness of word and work, Word and reality, it should be admitted that not only God's existence is finite and infinite, limited and limitless but also his word and knowledge, i.e. God's Word. And really. Narekatsi writes that even a hint, a short, finite word by God is 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, even as the Prophet

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

At the same time he emphasizes that God's word and knowledge are endless, infinite, limitless: God has infinite wisdom and even *You seek my return to you, but 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 infinity and limitlessness; the great thinker writes that man is able to know the surrounding world infinitely too. In Prayer 80 Narekatsi says that man, is able to know the hierarchic reality too, that man's knowledge corresponds, reflects the infinity of the reality like God's knowledge.

But (here Narekatsi passes 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. If God already knows everything, man tries to know it *though this knowledge is not enough*. It follows from this that God's knowledge is absolutely finite and infinite and man's knowledge relatively. There arises a large gap between man and God again: each of them knows the reality to the extent possible by him.

Of course, this phase of differentiation is 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 also relatively. 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 also absolutely. And this quality is attributed to the divine man, to that moment of man's existence. It is only all this that enables Narekatsi to attribute qualities to his *Book of Lamentations* (the outcome of his, human knowledge) which are typical of the divine Word: these features being comprehensiveness, almightiness, etc. And when the author says *I in all, and all in me (Pr. 72, C)* it is not only of ontological but also of epistemological value. As word and work, knowledge and reality are identical, this expression refers not only to man's existence but also to his knowledge: this thesis indicates that man not only owns, has everything, all in him, thus becoming identical with God, but also knows all, is all-knowing (achieves knowledge of all through faith, *the unobscured miracle, the knowledge of your Godliness (Pr. 34, B)*, faith due to which one *sees the future and hidden with the eye of the soul. (Pr. 10, D)*

The hierarcic nature of knowledge. The divine knowledge is homogenous and multilayered (has many meanings), consequently there is no dependence in God's knowledge (types are not determined by one another) and vice versa. Speaking of man's knowledge Narekatsi emphasizes

its hierarcic nature. In Prayer 6 he particularly says that man learns 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 hierarcic too and coresponds to and reflects a part of the endless hierarchy of the reality. *But the total number can be comprehended only by the one who sees as done*. And this is only the 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 realizes that even these categories are not enough. (C)

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

This part has another implication. Of course, Narekatsi differentiates not only God's knowledge and man's knowledge but also identifies them in the case of which both of them are attributed with the quality of absolute and relative hierarchy but then he differentiates and identifies them again and so on. As in the phases of differentiation there arises the problem of choice, Narekatsi emphasies that in all the phases of differentiation the limitedness and finitness of human knowledge in relation to God's knowledge is revealed, i.e priority and preference are given to

God's knowledge. The D part of the mentioned Prayer 6 is about it: however enriched, developed may the human knowledge be and identified with the divine knowledge, all the same it remains within its limits, incomplete and limited. But this is not a final decision either.

Narekatsi does not like being one-sided. He solves all problems within two systems of assessment, if it can be termed so, from two angles, two standpoints, from the point of view of God (absolute, eternal, infinite) and man (relative, mortal, finite). The thing that in all the phases of differentiation preference is given to the divine knowledge is a conclusion drawn from the standpoint of the first "system of assessment" but there is also another conclusion which is drawn from the second, man's "system of assessment". Here it is: the divine absolute knowledge is simultaneously absolute non-knowledge and the human absolute knowledge is simultaneously absolute non-knowledge (in accordance with the same logic of regarding human existence as relative; Narekatsi treats it as more acceptable than the divine existence (absolute) which is at the same time absolute non-existence).

And here too (in the phase of differentiation) Narekatsi gives preference to the human knowledge and chooses 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 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 but anyway Narekatsi puts the question of the necessity of seeing God and the study of the impassibility: *for to know you is a perfect justice*. From the very beginning, he touches upon the possibility and impossibility of knowing God. In this concern he goes deep into the interrelation of faith and knowledge. After long meditation he comes 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 begins 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 will build an edifice of faith. (B)

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

Why does 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 is built on a viewpoint of intellectual value: everything is possible and real in infinity. It is impossible either to deny or to confirm this view that is why he puts that thesis on the basis of his united edifice of faith and knowledge. It is not an ordinary faith; it is a faith in infinity. The object of Narekatsi's worship is the infinity, eternity. He is well aware of the finite's, man's weakness in relation to infinity, his weakness to overcome infinity (both practically and through knowledge), to overcome finally, that is why he says: *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 man recognize in general and how does man recognize God in particular? Narekatsi thinks that though God, as an impersonal beginning, is infinite and as a personal beginning finite, though incorporeal and corporal, all the same to know him is not only possible 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, if man is endowed with consciousness it is for seeking to see God and study the impassibility.

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 the 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 necessary not to adjust thinking to some system of limited laws and principles which is an outcome of thinking but the contrary 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, the aspiration to be free of the limitations typical of that period are manifested in this case too: Narekatsi is an advocate for the free, living human mind which does not endure *liimitations by law, legalism*, a mind awoken from the *death sleep* of the medieval *dark night* and being bored confronts (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 marks the beginning of the next, a 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 will dwell in detail.

The system and logic of the "Narek"

Though Narekatsi says *my mind whirls with anxiety unable to concentrate* (Pr. 23, B), it does not mean that there is no systematization in his views. Of course, no. Only at first glance does it seem that the views on man and the world are fragmented, disconnected, only at first glance, outwardly, and if we approach it in essence, we will discover an inner, essential, deep connection and mutual determination of Narekatsi's views, viewpoints, judgments and concepts and a harmonious and symmetric system of views based on the principle of 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 kind 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 touches upon eternal topics, the interrelations of the eternal and temporary, finite and infinite and he clearly realizes that it is 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 says that that he does not identify these endless evil deeds completely: *I have identified certain seeds of the thousands of evils, and even if through these he learns of others, he realizes 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 defines: *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.*

In this way, he gives *a part* of the infinite hierarchy of the world which symbolizes the whole hierarchy, *a part* of the infinite hierarchy of knowledge which symbolizes the whole knowledge. That *part* of the infinity not only symbolizes the infinity (besides being a part of the infinity) but is also a means for studying it. That *part* seems 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 achieves the sameness of system and method, when ontology, epistemology and logic coincide, are relatively identified, interwoven, and it is manifested in the main concepts of the interrelations of God and man.

There are two opposite methodological principles in Narekatsi's thoughts. On the one hand, he tries to avoid one-sidedness, confirming one he also confirms the other, rejecting one he rejects the other. For instance, he writes that God is exalted and humble or that man is not only evil but 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 it can be termed so, Narekatsi is guided by the principle of "completeness of controversy" in the development of all his judgments. In Prayer 38 he writes:

*Now, as I wrote in the beginning of this work, I
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 says: *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 knows that in order not to grow foolish in gaining the useful and in the choice of the good and kind, it is necessary to direct one's mind at one target and not at every target, i.e. it is necessary to follow the principle of non-controversy, according to which the same thing cannot be true and simultaneously false. Thus Narekatsi's logic relies on two opposite but mutually supplemative principles. Now let us consider how the unity of the one-sidedness and multisidedness (conditionally termed) of his mind is realized. It is said in his book that God is exalted and man is, for instance, humble, God is light, man is darkness. And immediately proceeding from the principle of completeness of controversy, he claims that God is not only exalted but also humble. Of course, he grounds this idea: *խնայրհիլեցիր վիշտ բարձրյալ*: 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-controversy, the following separate judgements can be made: the exalted humbled himself and the humbled rose and finally, again proceeding from the principle of the completeness of controversy, he comes to the conclusion that these processes take place simultaneously, parallelly: *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 does not take one direction absolutely in the process of thinking (or the same as taking many directions absolutely) but does it relatively, he simultaneously thinks in two directions not absolutely but relatively: first he examines the main, the common, the big and the whole then moves on to the secondary, the private, the small, the part, each of which has its parts, i.e. he passes from the big to small, from the small to smaller, from the whole to part and so on and then takes the opposite direction,

passes from the part to whole, from the small to big, from the big to bigger, etc.: *that 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 is one-sided because he first passes from the big to small, then from the small to big but this one-sidedness is relative too as eventually Narekatsi took two directions: 1) from the big to small, 2) from the small to big, i.e. it is relatively one united progress, direction, process of thinking and relatively two separate directions, progresses, processes. This is a dialectical manifestation of knowledge. It is the very law of the negation of the negation in the processes of gaining knowledge. In Narekatsi'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 is its complexity. It seems at first glance that he chatters, talks too much, mixing together concepts, judgements but it is not done without purpose. Speaking of God, Narekatsi enumerates God's numerous qualities and relations, usually the ones which are accepted in the Christian ideology. These parts are monotonous and the reader usually does not concentrate on each concept and judgement of the text and just reads and passes them without concentration on their meaning. Foreseeing this fact in advance, as if purposely, Narekatsi puts amid these lines, controversial concepts and judgements, different from the common part in content. E.g. he speaks of God's positive qualities in the first part of Prayer 90 and suddenly says that God is the end of trust. In the same way, speaking of man, he says such a lot of negative things about him and then suddenly makes a judgement about him and as if all that has been said is denied and it turns out that man is not such a negative creature. Narekatsi makes use of the technique of "compounding" and "colouring" concepts and judgements, definitions and descriptions mostly for logical purposes: it is a technique of developing the content of opposite, antinomic concepts which finally leads 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 makes use of the compounding of epithets thus achieving the ultimate (superlative) development, expansion, "exaggeration" of the content of one of the concepts, for instance, of the good, which suddenly leads to the radical change of that concept, its transformation into its opposite. It turns out that being too much absorbed in the concept of the "Good" one discovers that the good is the same as the evil and vice versa.

He has another technique opposite to this one. In this case judgements are incomplete, he does not come to final conclusions, e.g. *the origin of the Son by fatherhood, and not by priority* (Pr. 28, G). This judgement remains unsettled; usually if a father is the origin of the son, he ought to be prior to the son, and if he is not prior than he is not the origin of the son. But he does not reduce these judgements to small pieces, does not define concretely, on the contrary he leaves 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 exalted twofold-A. T.*). The logical transmutation of the structure of this judgement 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 man, secondly if we keep close to the principle of God's non-changability then God must not be exalted twofold, not change by accepting man. Thus Narekatsi unites two opposite judgements in one antinomy-judgement which is an infinite judgement from the point of view of logic.

Formation of Narekatsi's "Logic"

Special attention should be paid to the inner mechanism of the development of Narekatsi's views. While thinking of the revelation of that logic first of all attention is focused on the fact that Narekatsi's all thoughts undergo a common stage of development. 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 the Narekatsi's teaching is the God-man interrelation with its three aspects, ontological, epistemological and social-ethnic. The deepening and expansion of the God-man interrelation in these three aspects have resulted in the development of Narekatsi's ontological, epistemological and social-ethnic concepts the very unity of which comprises the great thinker's teaching. Though the God-man interrelation develops uniquely in each of these three aspects, though their contents are different, the generality and unity of their logic and inner structure are obvious, as well as the thing that the contents of these aspects are expended on the basis of a common "logic", that all the main ideas undergo the common phases of development in them...

Narekatsi's "logic" can be illustrated having as an example 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 that 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 (from the point of view of the succession of the writing too) to start the analysis, the study with the main, the basic, most frequently viewed question, the interrelation of "God" and "Man".

The historical development of the concepts of "God" and "Man" and their interrelation are expressed by Narekatsi in the form of the logical development of these concepts and their interrelation. Narekatsi has not only condensed and expressed the whole previous development of the question (G-M) but acquiring the neoplatonic achievements of that question, also developed them pointing to the all possible directions of the further development of the question and, what is more important, giving the algorithm of its further development.

Before Narekatsi, the question of the interrelation of the concepts, ideas "God-Man" has undergone two main phases of development: 1) The phase of uniqueness or privateness ($G \rightarrow M$), it is a relationship of man's dependence on God; like any of all beings man, too, depends on, proceeds from and is determined by God uniquely, privately. 2) The phase of specialness: $G \rightarrow M \rightarrow G$. The interrelation of God and man is viewed as a special interrelation. This idea was considerably developed in the different systems of the neoplatonic philosophy, not only the $M \rightarrow G$ interrelation is special, as among all creatures only man is able to become divine (to *return to God*) or to interact with and determine God but also the $G \rightarrow M$ interrelation is. In this, man's dependence on and his determination by God is not identical with the dependence of other earthly beings, nor is man's creation like the creation of other beings.

Narekatsi not only acquired the content of these two preceding phases as necessary steps of the development of thought but also elaborated them, passing from the phase of the special to the general though he is 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 is 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 the God-man interrelation Narekatsi does not concentrate on stating the fact of their existence (possibility), going on he discovers what is common to them. Then he passes from the common to the general. He reveals the generality of the special interrelations and the interrelations of God and any creature. The ($G \leftrightarrow M$) interrelation becomes general for all opposite concepts, interrelations, with the help of which this interrelation of already universal importance is characterized and defined.

It is necessary to show the concrete process of the logical development of the $G \rightarrow M$ 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 the God and man (=nature) interrelation, has been raised both before the Chastain 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. Narekatsi was well aware of debates (lasting several centuries) on Monophysitism and Dyophysitism (his ecclesiastical-doctrinal education in the monastery of Narek enabled it), besides, apparently, he knew about and maybe took 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 does not view this question as a narrow religious-doctrinal superficial problem or just a ground for ecclesiastical-political sovereignty, originality; he concentrates 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 views that

narrow private doctrinal problem as a variant of the general theoretical problem of the G→M interrelation:

God (=Christ) is God,

Man is man,

God (=Christ) is God and man,

So is man,

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

Man is God and man as man (to the extent possible by man)

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

So is man.

Of course, Narekatsi does not come to a stop on this, but now let us content ourselves with this much ... To all appearance, this was a complex process of mental suffering for the author and not a parade across a well-known path. Certainly, the transition to the next phase from each one 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 finds its Achilles's heel: the thing that God is identical only to himself, and man is identical only to himself means that God is not identical with anything else different from him, nor is man: 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 man is man and God). But it contradicts to the initial thesis: it was initially accepted that God and man are different, hence the initial opinion that "God is only God" is false, consequently to the principle of God's and man's difference corresponds the judgment "God is God and man while man is man". In this way, the principle of Dyophysitism is deduced (Narekatsi deduces 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 arises a chance of a new deduction, and the drawing conclusions becomes an imperative need (there arises a new inner controversy which is to be sublated). If God is man then man is God.

It turns out that to the principle of difference corresponds not only the judgement "Man is man, and God is God and man" but also the judgement "God is God, and man is God and man". 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 the differential relationships to be different from the other in that it is identical with something else different from it, and the other one is not: God is different from man because God is identical with something different from him (and there is nothing different from him, except the incarnate Son) and man is not. But second judgement corresponds to this demand pretty well too.

So the principle of Dyophysitism (God is God and man) together with its opposite (man is God and man) comprises 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 makes in his mind is more complex because the previous transition from the difference of God and man to their sameness is 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 this transition is a 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 is not possible as the thought has reached its perfection in this phase; the idea of the difference of God and man and the difference of their sameness has been 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 brings 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 of 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.

General nature and structure of the "Logic"

Thus the judgement “G and M as G and M are G and M” is Narekatsi's “Logic”.

It should be noted from the very beginning that Narekatsi's logeme is both a judgement and a process of deductions (a process of logical thinking and the final outcome of that process). Why is this judgement accepted as the general, the main logical law of Narekatsi's "Logic"? This judgement is common for the previous three judgements. None of the previous judgements can cover it while the latter has the previous ones as its constituent parts. It is the integral, the unity

of the previous three judgements. In this case, there may arise the question as weather other judgements of the same nature will be more general than this judgement of mine, regarded as logeme. Why this and not the succeeding judgements should be considered the main logical law, the "Logic"? The thing is that logeme is a relatively complete logical construction of the logical structure of a teaching, moreover it is the simplest structural unit, from the point of view of which other judgements are incomplete while the succeeding ones are extended, overmature, i.e. the succeeding ones are logemes in relation to the initial one. That is to say previous judgements are the phases of the formulation of logeme and succeeding ones phases of its expansion.

At last this judgement 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 the negation of the negation. For instance, the judgement "G and M are G and M" is considered relatively complete too but it is deviod of the 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 the negation of the negation or in other words, it is only an entire 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 developmet of thought of his teaching Narekatsi reaches a culminative point, logically coming to the conclusion that God and man are everything and at the same time nothing. It once more attests that Narekatsi's logeme is common for all antinomic concepts. Deducing that common judgement, Narekatsi starts using its construction as an operator, means, law of thinking. That is why Narekatsi seeks another, a more perfect formulatiom, a more general counterpart of that judgement and, that is why he works out the dialectics of the antinomic concepts "all, everything" and "nothing, non-being" (developing ancient thinkers' principle "all is all" and the neplatonic principle "God is everything and nothing").

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

Being (God) and non-being is being and non-being and is not.

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. Concept of Man

(Book of salvation and immortality)

The ultimate goal of Narekatsi's philosophical-ideological system is the problem of man. If by making gigantic spiritual-mental efforts Narekatsi tries to study, to reveal God's, the All's qualities and relationships, it is only and only for being able to reveal man's qualities and relationships, the aim of man's existence. The greatest aim of the thinker's life and philosophical activity was (I emphasise it with a deep feeling of responsibility) first to explain, reveal, to know Man and the world, and then the most important one, to change Man and the world for the better and more perfect. Of course, while raising and solving these problems Narekatsi proceeds 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 has drawn a lot of rational conclusions, moreover during raising and solving almost all the problems he partially and at times impudently and courageously comes out of religious-idealistic limits.

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

1. Man and his categories

(qualities)

Firstly, it should be again noted that while defining God and man Narekatsi makes use of two types of positive and negative qualities, diametrically opposite to each other. While revealing God's essence the starting points are positive categories from which negative ones are inferred and attributed to God, in the case of man he acts 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 controversialness of God's essence directly, in the case of man he is more courageous: he speaks of man's controversialness from the very beginning:

... contradictory impulses in my soul

brace for battle like clashing mobs.

Crowds of thoughts strike each other, sword

against armor, evil against good,

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

In order to describe man Gr. Narekatsi uses two types of qualities, diametrically opposite to each other: a) wicked, dark (shadow, i.e. material), brute (not wise), foolish, dead, deficient, small, temporary (mortal), unstable (changable), etc.; b) good, light, wise, living privilege, great (infinite), eternal, stable (unchangeable), etc. The thinker comes to the idea of their transmutation: if 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 leads to change and loss, that is why Narekatsi thinks that the perfect, “just” state for man is 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 are 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 is 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 fervor 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 accepts, distinguishes that Man is 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 undimishing fullness against my slavish poverty. (Pr. 17, B)*

And it is reasonable; Narekatsi takes it for granted but it does not content him as a man and a thinker; it is an initial statement and not a final conclusion for him. Narekatsi is a dialectical thinker that is why proceeding from the principle of the completeness of controversy, he grounds Man's being great, infinite, eternal, indestructible, his endowment with divine qualities, his being God (by the way, the existence of these very qualities gives Narekatsi a hope that man can become immortal).

Thus when revealing God's essence, Narekatsi starts with his positive qualities, on the basis of which he differentiates, deduces the negative ones, only in the end achieving their dialectical unity; in case of man vice versa, he begins with man's negative qualities (it is clear why), then differentiates the positive ones, achieving their dialectical unity in the end.

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

Man is infinite, endless and everything (all).

He treats 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 writes in 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. (E)

He accepts his, man's inability to identify, to 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

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 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 is connected with movement, change while death is connected with rest, *immovable and breathless death* (Pr. 18, G); the happy man, Job, regards death as rest (Pr. 55, E) but Narekatsi is a serious dialectician, he does not concentrate on it; he comes to the idea of the transmutation of life and death, movement and rest. He disagrees 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 really necessary to realize that death is a rest for an honest man and it is not a rest for the one bearing the burden of mortal deeds? If it is so, we have come across Narekatsi's next trick: yes why not call man sinful if it saves him from rest, i.e. death, he demands 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* (this is why he wants rest, wants 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 thinks that though he is alive he is a living dead and later speaking of death he demands *immortal death*. Through such a dialectical transmutation of concepts, Narekatsi discovers 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 reveals man's ontological nature with the help of "soul" and "body", the qualities incorporeal and corporal which are the most basic among ontological qualities.

Narekatsi reveals man's all qualities comparing them with God's qualities in the chain of sublatoins of God's and man's difference and sameness. From the beginning, in the first phase of differentiation God is regarded as incorporeal and man as corporal:

I. Differentiation

G is incorporeal

M is corporal

Identification

G is incorporeal and corporal

M is incorporeal and corporal

II. Differentiation

G is incorporeal and corporal to the extent possible by God, absolutely

M is incorporeal and corporal to the extent possible by man, relatively

Identification

G is incorporeal and corporal absolutely and relatively

M is incorporeal and corporal absolutely and relatively and so on and so forth.

In the first phase of differentiation the contradiction, controversy of the incorporeal and corporal is in the outer plane, outside of man (and God) because individually both of them are united, non-controversial innerly: either only corporal or incorporeal. In the first phase of identification vice versa, the opposition of the incorporeal and corporal is in the inner plane while in the outer plane they are united. The same is with the second phases of differentiation and identification.

When Narekatsi concentrates on the revelation of Man's essece, nature he considers the interrelation of soul and body in the planes of 1) unity, 2) controversialness, 3) unity or, more precisely, unity of opposites, despite man's relationship with God, outside of that relationship, i.e. with regard to man's inner plane.

At first man is viewed as an earthly, corporal being and as such, man is united: his nature is only earthly: it is earth, clay, substance. As such, he is not different from other corporal beings, is identical with stone (inanimate beings).

This initial unity is sublated with controversialness. Man is controversial by nature, consisting of two opposite origins, soul and body, which are always in struggle. This controversy gives birth to 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 that controversialness of soul and body man is identified with animals: *a talking horse*.

It is clear that this controversy is to be sublated with unity, i.e. controversy is to be overcome by unity (by a unity of higher level). Narekatsi differentiates two moments of overcoming, sublation: a) one of the opposite sides wins over the other thus controversy becomes unity; b) the opposite sides harmonize with each other, despite their opposition, become a unity, i.e. controversy is sublated with the unity of opposites.

The first type of overcoming the controversy has two sub-types. One of them is when the corporal 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 body suppresses soul, winning over it, when "darkness" in man wins over the divine "light". The other is when the incorporeal wins over the corporal. In this case, Narekatsi claims that "body is the prison of soul", consequently realizing it, the rational man tries to be free of the bondage of body. Demands on extreme, absolute ascetics are made: mortification of flesh, suppression of earthly desires, thereby defeating body and achieving soul's victory. In this case, preference is given to the soul. But the overcoming of the controversy in this way does not satisfy the great humanist; following the same direction, he comes to the second type of sublation of the overcoming of controversy by unity: in this case preference is not given to 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 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 transmits another nuance: gravity and coolness are qualities of the corporal beginning while leity and heat are those of the soul.

In this case, ascetics is not extreme, absolute but is relative. Narekatsi does not demand to mortify body, body passions, needs and habits but to fortify, perfect body and moderate one's passions. If at the moment of controversy man was identical with beast, the real human nature is displayed only at the moment of the unity of opposites when man identifies the controversialness of his essence, nature through his intelligence, changes, PERFECTS it, seeks for and achieves the sublation of that controversialness through the unity of opposites, i.e. man humanizes himself, he himself raises his nature to the real human level. It is a wonderful idea to which the medieval thinker has surprisingly come. It is true, Narekatsi will speak of it in detail later: *everything is in God's accounting*, consequently man's changing, perfecting his nature is determined, is foreseen by God too; but meanwhile he claims the opposite...

Thus, at the moment of 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 man's nature is manifested in this.

2. Genesis of Man

The categories of "created" and "uncreated" in relation to man

These two categories are opposite to each other and are united (even identical) for Narekatsi and are attributed not only to God but also to 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 man, on the other hand. For the purpose of justifying it, the author develops the following "logic". First, God is uncreated while man is created, as God is identical with man, he is not only uncreated but also created, and as man is identical with God, he is not only created but also uncreated. This is on the one hand. On the other hand, while considering the problem of the Trinity, he attributes to the Son the qualities of both being uncreated and created (originating), simultaneously claiming that any quality attributed to one of the persons of the Trinity is common for the whole Godhead; as the persons are identical God is not only uncreated but also created. If at first, as an initial thesis, Narekatsi claimed that God is uncreated and man is created, now he adds another statement to it: God is uncreated and created. In accordance with the principle of completeness of controversy, it follows (on the basis of combining these two judgments) that man, too, is not only created but 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 marks in the notes of his translation that the word *Uunı̄wδ* (God) is used in a relative sense, i.e. inventor, maker; I will add creator too.

One more fact. There is another idea: by “uncreated” Narekatsi means self-existent, self-caused, self-created when a particular being is not created by another being different from it, it is the cause of its emergence. As evidence of man’s being uncreated, Narekatsi claims that man, evil by nature, is the cause of his existence, is self-created, self-existent (something which used to be attributed to God). And to be created, made, in relation to man, means to be determined by another being (God) different from man. What does God’s being “created” mean? Here Narekatsi is on the point of reaching the emergence of an idea unnatural in the Middle Ages: God is determined by a being (beings) different from him. Nature, Man are the cause of God’s existence (and coming into existence) (Narekatsi makes 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*) is 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 are discussed in the system of sublations of sameness and difference of God and man too. At first differentiating God from man, Narekatsi attributes the quality of being uncreated to the first and the quality of being created to the second, then when identifying them, attributes these two qualities to both of them: God is not only uncreated but also created, and man is not only created but also uncreated. In addition, it should be noted that in Middle Ages these two categories were almost identified with the categories of “creator” and “creature”: “Uncreated” meant creator and “created” meant “creature”. So it is very courageous of Narekatsi to say that “God is also created”, something which in fact implies that God is a creator and a creature, likewise the attribution of the quality of being uncreated to man means that man is also a creator. This approach is natural, more exactly, reasonable for a thinker who has come to the idea of the sameness of God and man. However, the dialectic thinker does not confine himself to this phase of identification, the deductions of this level are not final truths, and he proceeds in his thoughts, sublating that 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 possible by him, absolutely, and man to the extent possible by him, relatively. This deduction has deep implications. On the one hand, God’s being uncreated is “thickened” which is acceptable to the Christian theology, but meanwhile God’s being created, that negative quality of God is absolutized too, (regarding God as “created”, i.e. creature, determined, is not enough for

Narekatsi, in this case he “exaggerates” more, saying absolutely created, creature, determined). On the other hand, man’s being uncreated is “thinned” in comparison with the same quality of God, which is praised by Christianity, but simultaneously he treats the quality of being “created” in the same way, which results in an absolutely different quality. In this phase of differentiation, Narekatsi’s choice is apparently for God; it seems he ranks God higher than man: by attributing absolute qualities to the first and relative ones to the second; he, however, gives preference to man in the same way as he treats God and man in the second phase of differentiation, during the consideration of the features of “existence” and “non-existence”. Narekatsi prefers relative “createdness” for absolute one, even if being relatively “created” means being relatively and not absolutely “uncreated”.

The conclusions of this phase of differentiation do not satisfy the dialectical thinker too and he makes the next step, sublating the difference by the sameness of God and man, by a sameness of a higher level. In this phase God is not only absolutely but also relatively uncreated and created as he is identical with man at this level, and man, too, is not only relatively uncreated and created but also absolutely, i.e. to the extent possible by God. In this phase, God and Man are regarded as creator and creature absolutely and relatively. Let us confine ourselves to this much though according to Narekatsi’s logic, this phase of sameness must be sublating by a difference of a new level too and so on. Thus, it turned out that man is absolutely and relatively uncreated and created or is created and is not created.

According to Narekatsi, the creation of man means his differentiation from God, break of their union, man's alienation, separation from God:

What am I worthy to ask of you in Prayer?

May I pray for

paradise, from which I have strayed?

your magnificent glory, which I am 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 am banished?

the living vine, from which I have been ripped away?

the shoot of the plant of bliss, from which I have dried up?

the grace of the flower of glory, from which I have fallen?

the legacy of praise, from which I was disinherited?

their unity, his alienation, separation from God on the one hand:

the devoted fatherly embrace, from which I have pulled away? (Pr. 24, A)

As such the created man, alienated from God, is *evil by nature*. However, at the same time man's creation, emergence, his alienation from God is not differentiation, on the contrary, man is created as a good being (Adam before eating the forbidden fruit) and as such, he is not alienated from God, he is united and even identical with God (there were case 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 was an idea of the sameness of the Son and Adam in the Christian history...). Thus, the creation is on the one hand differentiation of God and man, on the other hand identification. To all appearance, for Narekatsi man's uncreatedness is the same as his creation.

The cause of man's creation. Though in Prayer 46 of the *Book of Lamentations* Narekatsi says: *I do not know or understand, by whom, in whose image or why I was created*, he tries to give the answers to these questions and apparently, he tries to emphasize the limitedness of the content of these questions, the impossibility of man's full knowledge of these problems, and even such a question "By whom was I created?" was a courageous attempt to oppose to the medieval scholastics. Anyway, Narekatsi could not but be concerned with the cause of man's creation, and he tries to answer that question in his own way.

Let us present the elucidation of that problem through mental-logical experiment or experimentation in the purpose of justifying Narekatsi's solutions of some questions, problems once more on the background of his whole worldview or elucidating the truthfulness of our experiment consistently, according to his logic. Thus proceeding from the logic of his whole worldview, the question "Who has created man?" must be answered in the following way: "God has created man and has not, so and niether has man". In the system of sublations of the sameness and difference of God and man, the answer to the question ought to be this way:

I. Differentiation

G is the cause of man's creation

M is not the cause of man's creation

Identification

G is the cause of man's creation and is not
So and neither is man

II. Differentiation

G is the cause of man's creation and is not absolutely
M is the cause of man's creation and is not relatively

Identification

G is an absolute and relative cause and is not
So and neither is man.

And so on and so forth. The answer should be so. Now let us consider in what way what has been said above corresponds to Narekatsi's views on the problem.

From the very beginning Narekatsi claims that the cause of man's coming into existence is 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); *Before I was, you created me* (Pr. 18, A); it is clear why God is considered the cause of man's existence: God is the creator of everything, *beginning of all beginnings*, consequently man's *beginning* too. In this case when God is the creator and man is the created, it is clear for Narekatsi that man cannot be the cause of his creation as he cannot exist before coming into existence (this idea is surprisingly later sublated by Narekatsi). What has been said comprises the phase of the differentiation of God and man.

There is, however, a powerful fact which makes (does it really make or the great thinker finds and uses it with inner satisfaction?) the great thinker claim that the cause of man's coming into being, all the manifestations of man's essence, in general everything that is human is man himself: that fact is man's being evil by nature, his deeds are "sins", man is dark, and God cannot 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); *I planted in myself* (Pr. 21, B). All the vices, sins, consequently their bearer, man, *are nothing other than the tribe of foes* (Pr. 7, A).

In Prayer 21 he says: ... *I of my own will mortgaged myself to death*. If not God Almighty (*without whom there is no movement, no progress*) but man is the cause of man's death, it follows that the cause of man's creation is also man (likewise, as it will be mentioned later, man, man's deeds are of two natures, on the one hand, they lead man to loss, corruption in the case

when man's deeds are considered sins, on the other hand they are considered means of man's existence and even the reason of God's great salvation).

In this way, Narekatsi makes us come to the idea of the sameness of God and man, makes us sublimate the difference by sameness as it turns out that God is not only the cause of man's existence but also is not, so is man.

Then Narekatsi again differentiates man from God. God is and is not the cause of man's emergence to the extent possible by him, absolutely, while man's abilities of being and not being the cause of his emergence are more limited, relative. It is a new, a higher level differentiation of God and man. Narekatsi tries to sublimate this phase as well. He thinks that God and man are also identical to the extent possible by them, that God is and is not the cause of man's emergence not only divinely, absolutely but also to the extent possible by man, relatively, and man, too, is and is not the cause of his emergence not only to the extent possible by man but also absolutely, to the extent possible by God, 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 is dialectically controversial: they are identical in the first plane, as regards form: both of them are the cause of man's emergence, however they are different in the inner plane, in regard to content: God is the cause of the origination of man as a good being and not the cause of man as an evil being, the contrary is with man. Though in the above mentioned chain of sublations, Narekatsi claims the sameness of God and man formally, more exactly, from the point of view of form and comes to serious conclusions contradicting Christianity, however the difference of God and man is not sublated: God remains (and not) the cause of the emergence of man as a good being, and man as 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 God has no fault in the thing that man became evil, chose the evil existence (ate the forbidden fruit) willingly, which means the origination of man as an evil being; it is man that must be charged with this. Narekatsi consistently comes out of the bounds of even Christian and non-Christian Neoplatonism. Proceeding from the principle of the "completeness of controversy", the great dialectician himself says: *because my composition mixes the voice of good news with mournful protests, bringing justice and judgment* (Pr. 38, C), i.e. his "logic" makes him claim "this", simultaneously saying its opposite "that". Essentially, he deduces the judgment "God is the cause of man as a good being and man is the cause of man as an evil being", stating the contradiction between God and man, and compares it with another judgment

which states the difference of God and man. Here it is: “God is the cause of man as an evil being and man is the cause of man as a good being”. Through this comparison Narekatsi comes to the conclusion that God is (and is not) the cause of man as a good and as an evil being, so is man, consequently God and man are identical. Let us consider how he deduces God’s being the cause of man as an evil being, in general, God’s being the cause of evil; maybe this is the most important, daring outcome of his mental searching. While claiming that man is the cause of evil, *our wickedness is innate*, consequently man is the cause of man as an evil being, Narekatsi simultaneously claims, more exactly, makes us come to the opposite viewpoint. He writes 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, doer of good.*

It turns out it is God who is responsible for man’s “sins”, “misdeeds”. What is striking and amazing is that as if he does not say anything contradicting Christianity, he just emphasizes God’s omnipotence, all-powerfulness but there is 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 grounds it by the fact that by creating man as a good being, endowing him with free will, God knew in advance what would happen to 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 it is deduced that man is (and is not) the cause of the emergence of man as a good being. If God is the cause of the emergence of man as a good being and man is identical with God then man is the cause of the emergence of man as a good being too. Narekatsi states it in an indirect way. Firstly, when considering man's nature, we saw that man is the cause of man as such, as an honest and a good being. Secondly, the categories "existence" and "emergence" are not only different but also identical for Narekatsi, as well as the concepts "creation" and "return". According to him, with his good deeds man can and must contribute to his existence as a good, honest being, as man's every "step", action (of course if it is good, is aimed at the perfection, existence of the good) at the same time means continuation of emergence, existence of the real, perfect, good man (one "phase" of origination); thus man is even the cause of his existence as a good being, consequently the cause of his origination too. If one good deed can be a cause of God's great salvation, (Narekatsi evaluates the significance of his *Book of Lamentations* so and by God's great salvation he means recompletion of all) man can be the cause of his salvation, recompletion, recreation as a good and perfect being.

Thus from the very beginning expressing the idea that God is the cause of man's origination as a good being and is not is the cause of man as an evil being, and the contrary with man, Narekatsi then identifies God and man, regarding both of them being and not being the cause of man as good and man as evil. Let us confine ourselves to this much though this circle of Narekatsi's judgments keeps on developing in a direction stating that both God and man as good and evil are the cause of man as a good and evil being.

Now let us reveal from what man was created. Likewise the cause of man's emergence is outside of man (it is both God and he himself), during the consideration of this question it turns out that Narekatsi has two mutually exclusive but meanwhile mutually supplementary answers: man was created out of something different from and outside of him and meanwhile out of himself. That something, outside of and different from man (and Nature), from which he was created is called "nothing" or "non-being": *creator of all out of nothing* (Pr. 22, E); *I contemplate with my mind's eye all creation out of nothing by the hand of our maker* (Pr. 11, A). However, as we could see, God is everything and at the same time nothing for Narekatsi, consequently the something, outside of and different from man, out of which man was made, is God. So when Narekatsi says that God is the *beginning of all beginnings* it should be perceived in two ways: firstly, God is the beginning subject of all beginnings, subject of the process of beginning, creator, maker and secondly, he is an object from which all beginnings originate. 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 is also the object of man's emergence is very

important as the great thinker directs the reader's mind to the same path, this time in regard to another problem: if man come forth from God who is not only nothing but also everything then man came forth from not only nothing but also everything, from the hierarchy, gradation of the whole diversity. It is proved by the fact that *all beings were created* for man: by establishing succession, dependence in the origination of the whole diversity and regarding man as the top, the crown of that diversity, it is proved that man was made from the very diversity prior to him.

Narekatsi does not try to go deep into the question of man's origination from man, though he leaves room for it. What he avoids saying in this case he says while considering the question of *man's return to man*. Man proceeded from man who is everything and nothing.

Narekatsi also a little touches upon the question of with what God and Man create, make Man. On the one hand, he claims that God created everything, consequently man too, through Word: *who with but an utterance created the entire universe* (Pr. 63, C), on the other hand he says 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 says *all 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 *original matter*. In spite of these beliefs, the author suddenly claims that God has created man form nothing with his hand. Proceeding from the initial theses, it is clear that if man was created out of nothing then through Word and if he was created by God's hand then through *original matter*. But no. Narekatsi seems to synthesize these two diametrically opposite viewpoints into one judgment: man was created form nothing but by God's hand. I want to emphasize that this judgment is not casual in the system of Narekatsi's views, that he puts 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" is the *original matter* itself from which 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 is opposite to the original matter, (the latter has itself come forth from nothing), is not identical with it, consequently man as everything else was created form nothing not with God's hand, work, but through word. These two diametrically opposite viewpoints are united, synthesized in an antinomic judgment, a 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 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 is why Narekatsi says that man was created out of nothing with "hand". Why with "hand" and not through Word? The reason is that hand (work) and Word are identical, so that in this case this judgment would be equal and identical with another judgment: man was created out of the original matter through Word.

It turned out that God created man through Word and hand (work). As man is identical with God then man has 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 man's return, recreation, salvation, renewal he thoroughly considers the question of how man achieves his renewal, return, recreation through his word (intelligence) and work, and as the return, renewal is not only different from creation but also identical for Narekatsi, it follows that man can not only return himself through word and work but he 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 puts the question of the comparison of God's and man's word and work and solves it in his own way. God's Word and work, wish and ability are identical while those of man are different: *Knowing full well what was improper, I strayed from the path, sinning in all ways in all things* (Pr. 20, B). In this case, David Anahgt's influence is apparent: God can do as much as he wants while man cannot. But God and man are identical for Narekatsi, consequently God's Word and work are not only identical but also different (evidence of this difference can be at least the fact that angels were created through Word while man with God's hand (work), and man's word and work are not only different but also identical (for Narekatsi thinking of evil is equal to doing it). This sameness of God and man is sublated: God's Word and work are absolutely identical and different while those of man relatively: man's word and work, wish and ability are relatively identical. Like David Anahgt, for our author too, God can do as much as he wants while man (the perfect philosopher for David Anahgt) can want as much as he can do....

It has already been spoken about the essence of word, the interrelation of God's and man's rational (cognitive) capabilities, now let us dwell upon the essence of deed, the interrelation of God's and man's practical capabilities.

The essence of work consists in the fact that it is the means of existence (non-existence), creation (corruption), return and at the same time essence (concrete work is its part) as such, work is the movement itself (is identical with movement) or its part (in the same way non-work is rest for Narekatsi). As movement and rest are the means of existence and non-existence and the existence and non-existence themselves (movement is also non-existence, rest is not only non-existence but also existence), so are work and inaction.

Variants

1. G- potent

M- impotent

1. G- potent and impotent

So is man

2. G- absolutely potent (omnipotent) and impotent

M- relatively potent and impotent

2. G- absolutely and relatively potent and impotent

So is man

Narekatsi differentiates (not only in regard to man but also God) two types of deeds, evil and good. At first he considers all the manifestations of human nature evil, “sins”, as deeds of a being, alienated and different from God, while God’s deeds as good. Then he deduces that man is also a doer of goodness, even *distributor of the parcels of God’s light with his right hand*, (Pr. 78, C), then he identifies and differentiates God’s and man’s deeds. Narekatsi differentiates or identifies good and evil deeds from two points of view, in two assessment systems, if to term it so: what is unpleasant for God is pleasant for man and vice versa. It turns out that what is evil from God’s point of view is good from man’s point of view and vice versa. A deed aimed at man’s corruption and not at his existence or emergence is unpleasant for man, is evil from his point of view as that same deed is pleasant for God, i.e. is not aimed against God’s existence (by the way, it follows from this that God is also the cause of death, corruption, that man’s corruption, loss is also pleasant to God and even necessary for him (*you did not make death or take joy in human misery*, (Pr.15, D)), it contributes to his existence, recompletion (through the corruption of body soul man will return to God, and *places left empty by the fallen angels, be filled by human beings* (Pr. 34, M), something which is necessary, consequently pleasant to God) and vice versa: the deed which is aimed at man’s existence (physical existence, aimed at satisfying the needs of body, etc.) is unpleasant to God, is evil from his point of view as it is against the incorporeal God. But our author does not content himself with this much; as the

above mentioned was viewed from the point of view of the difference of God as incorporeal, and man as corporal, 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 man's existence (coming into existence) it does the same to God (yes, 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, in addition absolutely and relatively.

The problem has two aspects for Narekatsi. In terms of the contemporary language it would be called "differentiation" and "integration"; Narekatsi characterizes these two aspects with two ranges of concepts: 1) Division, dispersion, degradation, decomposition, spread, disappearance, thinning, expansion, etc. 2) Unity, assembling, renewal (or recompletion), thickening, completion, shrinkage, etc. These are, rather, two types, forms of work. These two ranges are continued, completed by concepts which are 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. These last two ranges of concepts are used by the author not only in their social sense but also in a wider sense. These concepts are used to express the relationships of the part and whole (Pr. 46): parts of body are *united under one yoke*, wholly submit body, depend on, are subordinate to it, at the same time body, ruling over its parts, to some extent, depends on and submits each one of them as the change of any part results in the change of the whole...

Narekatsi not only differentiates these two aspects of work but also identifies 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, bowing is identical with sin, revolt, disobedience as both of them lead man to loss, corruption (of course, later, Narekatsi reveals that both of them lead also to existence, life, eternity). The author believes that by submitting, losing, regretting, being humble one can subdue, win... He means this when he says: *Indeed this “I have sinned” is a blessed phrase in this Prayer for the heart set on 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, rule. The dialectician has come to the conclusion that

...sometimes... in the middle of wild, unkempt horses,

will be a tame sheep,

in the midst of beastly dogs, a sacrificial lamb,

and mildness amid harshness,

perfection amid defects,

humility amid haughtiness...

purity amid perversity...

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

Narekatsi also deduces its opposite. In the same way, thickening and thinning, spread and gathering, expansion and shrinkage 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 man's deeds which presuppose absolute and relative “shrinkage and expansion”, “submission and subduing”.

Narekatsi's views on this question, too, are closely related to the viewpoint existing in the repository of the Armenian philosophical thought before him. In Anhaght's works one can at first see contrast, differentiation of God's and man's creative capabilities (God is creator, man is creature), then also identification but relative, not absolute identification: man (a perfect philosopher for Anhaght) is like God: “God can as much as he wants, a perfect philosopher wants as much as he can”. Differentiating God's and man's creative capabilities Anhaght, passes on to their identification but does not put an emphasis on it and immediately sublates the sameness by a difference of higher level: God's creative ability is absolute and unlimited, man's

creative ability is relative, limited, in other words God is an absolute creator, man a relative creator. D. Anhaght does not proceed any more in his conclusions and contents himself with this (second) level of differentiation. Narekatsi follows the same views; maybe that rationally realized process of the development of Narekatsi's thought is comparatively more consistent. In every stage of differentiation and identification he tries to infer all the possible conclusions of the sameness and difference: at first by differentiating, God is proclaimed as a Creator, man as a creature than by identifying, man is regarded not only as creature but also a creator, maker, begetter, and God is not only Creator but also ... Narekatsi does not say directly that God is creature but he almost, skillfully hints at this, emphasizing that the incarnate God is for Mary, man: *your Son by birth, and your Lord by creation*; Mary is proclaimed as *handmaid and Mother of God* at the same time. Narekatsi puts a mutual genetic dependence between God and man, they are mutual cause and result. This viewpoint is not alien to Narekatsi, it is harmoniously interwoven with his ontological system where the whole and part, material and non-material (body and soul), to cut it short, all opposites are mutually dependent and transmute into each other. In the phase of identification, not only man is identified with God (as it was in the case of D. Anhaght: man is a creator too) but also God is identified with man (like man, God is also passive and not only active, a creator). Like D. Anhaght, Narekatsi sublates this sameness by difference too: man is an absolute creator and creature (he is absolutely *Son by birth, and Lord by creation*) and man is a creator and creature relatively, to the extent possible by him (*handmaid and Mother of God* relatively, i.e. God's cause and result, creator, maker and the created, made by God). In this phase of differentiation man's creative abilities are limited in comparison with those of God. The creative man is inferior to the omnipotent God as God creates out of nothing and man from what exists. Man is not able to create out of nothing, the limitedness of man's creative abilities in comparison with God's omnipotence consists in this. Here it is necessary to concentrate on an interesting fact. On the one hand, Narekatsi considers the creation from nothing a greater power than the creation from what already exists, its renewal because it expresses the God's creative priority over man's creative capabilities, on the other hand proceeding from the necessity of renewal, recompletion of man and everything, he ranks the power of renewal and creation from what already exists 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 does not confine himself to this phase of differentiation too, he sublates 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 man are absolute and relative creators. God creates not only out of nothing but also out of everything, from what exists, and man, too, creates not only out of what exists but also out of nothing, man is god to the extent possible by God, absolutely. Though Narekatsi does not mark it directly it follows from the logical development of his ideas, and our author even dares to say: *I shudder at the thought that my accounts, the accounts of a mere mortal (man) go too far.* There is no need to be surprised at this viewpoint because it, is 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 who with good vision have no need of a guide (Pr. 59).*

And this chain of sublations prolongs over and over. God’s and man’s works are finite and infinite, creative capabilities are unlimited and limited, in addition absolutely and relatively.

Till now the concept of “the creation of man” was developed on the basis of uncovering and revealing the cause and means as well as on the basis of out of what man was created. But the development of the theme of “the creation of man” is not over by that. 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 man is created.

While considering the cause, let us dwell upon the fact that man is created as good and evil, i.e. the nature of the result of the creation was, to a certain extent, touched upon. However, it should be added that for Narekatsi man’s nature is not confined to the qualities of good and evil. As we have seen, from the beginning Narekatsi characterizes man with two ranges of concepts; accordingly all these concepts should be put into “circulation” here. Let us mention just a few of them: man is created as 1) being and non-being (everything and nothing), 2) eternal and temporary (immortal and mortal), 3) uniform and controversial, 4) master of all, whole and servant, part, etc., as incorporeal (soul, word) and corporal, as endless, infinite and finite....

The same refers to God and man as causes of creation. What has been said will take the following shape in the chain of sublations of sameness and difference: in the first phase of differentiation God, as having positive qualities, creates 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); God is not the creator of evil, wicked, so he has endowed man with only and only positive qualities. God as eternal, united, incorporeal, infinite creates man as identical with him, eternal, united, incorporeal, infinite, etc. and man, as a being with negative qualities, creates man as identical with him, evil, temporary, controversial, corporal, finite, etc.

In the phase of identification God as a being with both positive and negative qualities, creates man as a being with positive and negative qualities, so does man. In the second phase of differentiation God as a being with absolutely positive and negative qualities, creates man with absolute qualities while man as a being with relative qualities (both positive and negative) creates man as such, and in the next phase of identification both man and God, as beings with absolute and relative features, create 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 man create man absolutely and relatively, finitely and infinitely, directly and indirectly, necessarily and unnecessarily. To Narekatsi's mind, *all beings were created* for man and it is perceived in two senses: man was created out of nothing immediately in parallel with the whole diversity that is why he claims *all creation out of nothing* (Pr. 11, A), then he develops the idea that first all beings were created, then man was, all beings were created for the creation of man, that man is the crown of creation, the final phase, that the primordial matter (corporal light) was created out of nothing, stars (luminaries) out of the primordial matter, *then the mass of the earth floating in air*, then animate beings and at last man, i.e. man is created through the medium of the whole diversity. This idea is confirmed also by the fact that God is an *unreachable distance, immediate closeness* (Pr. 23, A) for every being, consequently for man too. In terms of structure this means that all are in God, so God is an *unreachable distance* for every being and man, the unity of the infinite is infinitely mediated for its part, is distant, unapproachable. 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, so the unity of the infinite is *immediate closeness* for every being, i.e. God (as a symbol of infinity, unity) is identical with an individual being, man, that is why their interrelation, dependence is immediate. In terms of creation it means that God creates 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 again all bounds of measure and weight, by the flow of your power and exceeding goodness* (Pr. 35, A). God just said accidentally and created man as well as the whole universe, or in the process of self-alienation, incarnation man suddenly came into existence. Man's accidental creation is a result of God's being humanist, his sudden goodness. But Narekatsi believes that God cannot but be humanist, good, omnipotent, consequently he has created man necessarily: he created man proceeding from the necessity of being good, humanist as he was called humanist, just not for the creation of the orders of angles, universe, etc. but for saving man, i.e. he was called humanist, just in relation to man.

Let us consider this question from the point of view of structure. Narekatsi says:

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 man, consequently he has created man accidentally. But at the same time Narekatsi claims that God does not want even one of small beings to be lost, that man's loss is not pleasant to God, it does not make him happy, that is why God is in thirst of man's existence, salvation. So God is in need of man, he created man necessarily (proceeding from 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 is created necessarily and accidentally.

Before ending this chapter, I would like to dwell upon the creation of man more concretely, showing the transmutation of concepts, the development of opposite concepts into each other.

Phase 1. 1) God as incorporeal (heavenly, soul, word) creates, gives birth to man as incorporeal, identical with him. As such, the created is, evidently, man's soul; it is man from the sphere of soul (heavenly man). The symbolism of such a creation can be seen in the procession of God's Word. In this case man's soul (man as soul) comes 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 individual souls. That is to say, God as a unity creates man as a unity

(a unity of souls). In this case, it can be said that by tightening, shrinking, God, as a unity of souls, becomes man, a soul or a human soul which encompasses all souls too. In this way the eternal comes forth from the eternal (God as eternal), the infinite from the infinite, etc., or any category expressing a positive quality turns into itself. 2) Man as a corporal being creates, brings forth man, as a being identical with him, as corporal. Man, as a mortal, limited, imperfect (incomplete, unripe) part, brings forth a being, endowed with the same qualities. In this case, negative categories turn into themselves. By expanding, man, as mortal, as a part, brings forth a being identical with him. It should be marked from the beginning that expansion, differentiation, corruption, split are viewed by Narekatsi as negative qualities and are attributed to man, limited beings; they are typical of the finite, mortal, part, inferior; the unripe tries to become ripe *Trying to be completely pure, I was corrupted completely* (Pr. 55, F). More exactly this way: whole is complete, extensive, superior, ruler, mature, unlimited, endless, unmeasureable, eternal while man as a part is not complete, extensive, is imperfect, inferior, “unripe”, limited, mortal, shrunk, and that is why a 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 become ripe, the imperfect 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 become inferior, the big become small, etc. because how can the unlimited become more unlimited, the complete become more complete, the extensive become more extensive, the big become bigger or the small become smaller (it is already small), the shrunk become more shrunk, the limited become more limited, part 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 persecution? (Pr. 17)

That is why God as a unity, unlimited, etc. must (necessarily) shrink, become limited while man, as a part, limited must expand, spread, etc. That is why God as incorporeal, heavenly light (Word) must thicken, bringing forth man as corporal, dark, shadow; God as unlimited must become limited creating man as limited, and man as limited, corporal, etc., by expanding,

spreading, ruling, becoming complete, must create man as unlimited, incorporeal. In this case, each of the opposite categories, expressing opposite qualities, transforms, turns into its opposite: the incorporeal into corporal, the eternal into temporary, infinite into finite, etc. By thickening God as incorporeal, heavenly light (shadowless light), created the corporal man in the same way as the incarnation of God's Word is:

You humbled yourself, exalted one.

You became meek, awesome one.

You were revealed, Lord beyond words.

You were defined, boundless one.

You were measured, unexaminable one.

You focused light, radiant one.

You became human, incorporeal one.

You became tangible, immeasurable one.

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

And man as corporal, by expanding, or more exactly by "thinning", clearing away, spreading as darkness, density, fog, becomes man as incorporeal, heavenly light (Word). In the first case, man is a extinguished ray, in the second case man comes into existence through the extinguished becoming radiant. The second case is when Narekatsi calls for man's being ascetic, suppressing body passions, mortifying the flesh, as a result causing the existence of man as an incorporeal, heavenly light (Word, soul), eternal, immortal, etc.

However, because of good reasons the judgments of this phase do not content Narekatsi and he moves 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 sublates this phase of differentiation with a phase of identification. 1) God as eternal, incorporeal, infinite not only shrinks, becomes limited but also expands, spreads and in this way brings forth man as corporal and incorporeal, eternal and temporary, infinite and finite, etc. 2) The same is with man. In this case not only the sameness of God and 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 creates man. 1) By shrinking, thickening eternally, God as incorporeal brings forth man as corporal, temporary. This moment is already clear. It should only be added that this moment has two cases: not only a) by shrinking, thickening infinitely, necessarily, directly God brought forth man as corporal, finite, etc. but also b) by shrinking, thickening finitely, unnecessarily, indirectly, he created man as corporal, finite, etc. 2) By shrinking, thickening infinitely God as incorporeal creates man as incorporeal, eternal, endless, i.e. as a being identical with him. This moment of creation of man symbolizes the Son's procession from the Father. The Son proceeds from the Father but is identical with him, is incorporeal, eternal like him, and as man is identical with the Father (Narekatsi particularly often emphasizes man's and the Son's unity, sameness). Consequently, man comes forth from God as incorporeal, eternal. This moment has two cases too: thickening, shrinking directly and indirectly, infinitely and finitely, necessarily and unnecessarily God brings forth man as incorporeal, eternal... The small originates from the big through the latter's becoming small, the big originates from the small through the latter's becoming big; this is clear, 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 are the questions the great thinker was deeply concerned with, he was fully aware of all these complications and he sublates 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 is why he claims that there is humility amid haughtiness, sublimity amid humbleness, etc. that 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). If till now he claimed that it is impossible to defeat the defeated, to stir the stirred, to shake the shaken in the sense that it is not admissible to belittle the small, to exalt the exalted, to shrink the shrunk, to expand the expanded as the small does 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), now he sublates dialectically what he has claimed: the small can become smaller, the big bigger, it is possible to split by becoming complete, to become complete by splitting, by becoming bigger the big brings forth the big, the small gives rise to the big by becoming smaller, the big gives rise to the small and big by becoming bigger, etc.

God is also identical with man in that by expanding, spreading he brings forth man. 1) By expanding, thinning, God as incorporeal, eternal brings forth man as incorporeal, eternal, endless. By expanding, spreading, the divine light, the heavenly, incorporeal light causes the

existence of incorporeal light. This moment of the creation of man is identical with the Son's birth. The Son is *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 brings forth a being identical with him, the Son, and as man is identical with God, by expanding, God brings forth man as incorporeal, eternal. But 2) due to the same expansion, spreading, split the contrary occurs: God as incorporeal, eternal brings forth man as corporal, temporary, etc. By spreading, expanding, thinning the divine, heavenly light causes the dark, gloomy, corporal to come into existence. Through the expansion of the infinite, the finite comes into existence. By expanding and shrinking God as corporal, immortal, limited brings forth man as corporal, mortal and incorporeal, eternal.

Man creates man. By expanding and shrinking, man, as corporal, mortal and incorporeal, eternal, brings forth man as corporal and incorporeal, immortal and eternal.

In the next, third phase the sameness is sublated by a difference of a higher level.

- 1) By expanding and shrinking absolutely, God, as absolutely corporal and incorporeal (body and soul), brings forth man as absolutely corporal and incorporeal,
- 2) By expanding and shrinking relatively, man as relatively corporal and incorporeal, (body and soul) begets man as relatively corporal and incorporeal.

And only in the fourth stage, through the sublation of this difference by sameness of a new level, Narekatsi comes to the idea that by expanding and shrinking absolutely and relatively God and man, as absolute and relative, soul and body, bring forth man as absolutely and relatively corporal and incorporeal. Only in this phase does it become clear that man comes into existence as limitless and limited, corporal and incorporeal (Word, soul) in the result of absolute and relative expansion and shrinkage, that by expanding and shrinking, God, as absolutely corporal, brings forth man as absolutely (limitlessly) corporal and incorporeal and relatively corporal and incorporeal. God does the same as absolutely incorporeal too.

3. Man's return

Man who did not exist once came into existence but as he is mortal he is to be no more one day. Narekatsi is concerned with this fact most of all and he seeks 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 is the question that bothers the great thinker and after long meditation he comes to the following conclusion: the emergence of man (as mortal) is his differentiation, alienation, separation from God:

May I pray for

paradise, I from which I have strayed?

your magnificent glory, which I am 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 am banished?

the living vine, from which I have been ripped away?

the shoot of the plant of bliss, from which I have dried up?

the grace of the flower of glory, from which I have fallen?

the legacy of praise, from which I was disinherited?

the devoted fatherly embrace, from which I have pulled away?

Or may I pray

that I might be honored with clothing of light,

from which I have been stripped?

that I might hope for return to my creator,

from whom I have been estranged?³

that I might turn my desires to the light,

from which I have 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 am 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 man. Here the influence of the neoplatonic traditions is observed: everything originates from the unity, God, and is reduced to him.

* * *

The whole system of Narekatsi's views is an endless chain of sublations, negations (an upward, spiral movement of thought), the main concepts of this chain are God and man. At first 1) as opposed to each other God and man are differentiated: God is eternal, infinite, all-knowing, united (non-controversial), good while man is temporary, finite, unripe, controversial, evil, etc. This phase of differentiation is sublated by sameness: 2) man is not only temporary but also eternal and God is not only eternal but also temporary. Then again differentiation follows: 3) man is god to the extent possible by him; God is good, perfect absolutely. 4) The next phase is 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 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, 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. 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 mutually determined, are transmuted into each other: during the differentiation the thought (that man is not God, eternal) becomes the cause of stirring up of 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 becomes the cause of good mood, positive emotions, and in this way, thought becomes the cause of emotion and vice versa.

It should be noted that there is another important fact: Narekatsi or the lyrical hero does not always give way to despair; on the contrary, during one of the phases of differentiation he is pleased with the idea that man is not God. However striking and odd it may seem it is so. Narekatsi guesses and realizes that to be God means to be deprived of everything that is human and earthly, that to be absolutely eternal means to be absolutely temporary too that is why he 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 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.

There are two types of return for Narekatsi: identification of man and God, differentiation of the relative and absolute. The first is the influence David Anghat, the second one that of neoplatonic mysticism.

The cause of return. In the first phase of differentiation of God and man, God is proclaimed the cause of everything, including the cause of 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 man a relative one, in the next stage of identification man is proclaimed as an absolute cause like God too.

Absolute return. Through absolute words, God returns man finitely and infinitely. Absolute word is an absolutely finite, concise and infinite word (*You seek my return to you, but do not grow weary* (Pr. 58, B), consequently he says finitely and saves finitely and vice versa, says infinitely and saves infinitely. This is expressed in the duration of the time of saving. Narekatsi says that God does not need time for saving him, i.e. man's return is timeless which, as it was revealed, means duration of finite and infinite time. Man's return is realized so.

God saves man through word directly and indirectly; God is an *unreachable distance, immediate closeness*, in this way he creates and returns everything. The Son is proclaimed as the *mediator of our reconciliation* (Pr. 11, D) through whom man is saved. The incarnate God is identified with the whole material diversity that is why in Prayer 28 such ideas are 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 blows, ... submerge and destroy all sins and clear them away (E). And it is not accidental that he mentions here: 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). It turns out that through the salvation of the incarnate God, all beings, man is saved and vice versa, through man's salvation all are saved. So god saves man absolutely indirectly, through all beings (the incarnate Word, Christ), and 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 does not save man necessarily, he saves him just humanely, due to his exceeding goodness; God cannot but be good, humane, consequently proceeding from its necessity he saves: *You, on the contrary, are not even capable of evil: You are good in your very essence (Pr. 34, K).*

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; *"I have sinned" is a blessed phrase in this Prayer for the heart set on hope (Pr. 27, C);* confession wins over creation. And through absolutely infinite word he gets to know God, consequently is saved. For Narekatsi his *Book of Lamentations* is such an infinite, all-inclusive word to God in favor of man's salvation. Of course, it should be mentioned in advance that the absoluteness of man's word is sublated by relativeness in the next phase.

* * *

Through his word, man absolutely separates his body from soul and joins God spiritually. It is here that Narekatsi's mysticism is manifested: he defames body, earthly life, preaches mortification of the body and passions for the soul to live eternally. In this case ascetics becomes radically, absolutely negative.

But at the same time man achieves absolute harmony, unity of his body and soul through his work and in this way becomes god absolutely. This viewpoint was a novelty for the whole Middle Ages. He does not demand to mortify the body, suppress passions; on the contrary he demands to comply with body passions. In this case, ascetics becomes positive, with the ultimate purpose of eternal coexistence of the body and soul.

Man becomes 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 is only infinite Narekatsi claims the contrary: this process is not only infinite but also finite. The process of falling down and rising is the process of creation and return.

Logical principles of the return, salvation

In the first phase of differentiation

a) By expanding, spreading, thickening, man, as corporal, finite, returns to God as incorporeal, eternal. This is the moment of the opposition, differentiation of return and creation. If the creation is the corporal man's origination from the incorporeal God in the result of thinning, shrinkage, then the return is its opposite process: by expanding, spreading, corrupting, thickening, the corporal, finite, mortal man turns into incorporeal, eternal God. It should be noted that till now those who have studied Narekatsi's philosophical system (Chaloyan, Khrlopyan), indicating the influence of the Neoplatonism on Narekatsi's philosophy, have not noticed the fact of the development of Neoplatonism by the great Armenian philosopher; due to it he avoided being epigone and became the founder of an independent, unique philosophical system, teaching. The thing is that Neoplatonism tried "to consistently infer from the divine unity, as an ultimate basis for every kind of being, the gradation of all other beings existing in the world and mark the way back to the initial unity". That is to say, Neoplatonism is characterized by the following line $G \rightarrow N (M) \rightarrow G$ which in Narekatsi's work expresses the moment of the initial opposition, differentiation of man (nature) and God, creation and return, i.e. it is one of the aspects of Narekatsi's philosophical system, in addition the initial, source aspect, it is only the beginning of the development of his system, teaching...

This is the moment when there remains nothing except demanding the suppression of passions, "mortification" body; in this way by thickening, spreading, clearing away as fog, man as corporal will turn into man as incorporeal: *melting the substance of stone with fire, with all the other elements of nature at that time* (Pr. 79, B).

b) By shrinking, thinning the incorporeal man becomes corporal man. Narekatsi emphasizes 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 corporal man's transformation into the incorporeal man, and they comprise a cycle together: $M \rightarrow M \rightarrow M$ which

is an elaboration, change, a variant of the neo-platonic line $G \rightarrow N (M) \rightarrow G$ which is actually identical with the line $M \rightarrow G \rightarrow M$, corporal \rightarrow incorporeal \rightarrow corporal.

In the second stage of identification incorporeal and corporal man becomes a) incorporeal and corporal man b) incorporeal and corporal God. This stage is the dialectical sublation, partial concretization, development of the initial phase of differentiation. At first it follows from the sameness of God and man that the one who returns, man, is not only corporal but also incorporeal (consists of two beginnings, soul and body), then it follows from that sameness that man returns, turns into not only God but also into himself: both God and man as objects of reduction, as the ones into which man turns, are corporal and incorporeal. The most essential here is the fact that Narekatsi deduces the idea that man returns not only to God but also to man: *He does not ask to be among the immortals, who live in the light... among broken hearted and contrite* (Pr. 30, B). Here, of course, dominant is the poet Narekatsi's boundless humanism, and Narekatsi's human dignity and conscience speak here. (This is a vivid example of how sensitivity and emotions make the great thinker come to ideas contradicting medieval traditions. Narekatsi is an exceedingly sensitive man and an astonishingly deep thinker). Of course, this phase will be sublated, developed in the next phases too. In this stage the return to man and to God are identical as both God and man are corporal and incorporeal. This is why, man returning to himself, i.e. preserving the balance between his opposites, returns to God, becomes corporal 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 are made of humble clay

and accept the crown of tribulation. (Pr. 86, A)

Here Narekatsi suggests the healing of the soul and body (psychic and physical illnesses and pains), fortification, perfection of the soul and body: not to mortify body and body passions but develop them moderately without damaging the soul, within the limits of the balance of the body and soul. In this way man returns, turns into man, which means return to the corporal and incorporeal man. To keep the soul and body in balance, 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 hinted in the *Book of Lamentations* frequently, even in the above extracted part 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 perfect, so that by “just” one can freely understand God. In Prayer 46 it is said that man is a balance, unity (whole) (and also an opposite, as part) of opposites and *in the living image of God, is completely condemned, my enslaved soul (C)*, so God is a true unity of opposites.

Man’s return means that man’s opposites harmoniously turn into God’s opposites and meanwhile it means that man’s opposites harmoniously transmute into one another and into themselves:

The incorporeal becomes corporal

The incorporeal becomes incorporeal

The corporal becomes corporal

The corporal 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 man and God is different because man as corporal and incorporeal is different from God who is both corporal and incorporeal. In this phase the first one is corporal and incorporeal relatively while the second one absolutely. That is why man’s return to man and God is different. If in the second phase man and God were identical and man’s return to man was not man’s transformation into something different from him, in this stage, on

the contrary, man's return is not only return to himself but also something different from him, to God.

- a) Man as relatively corporal and incorporeal returns to God as absolutely corporal and incorporeal.

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 corporal and incorporeal opposites:

relatively corporal becomes absolutely corporal

relatively incorporeal becomes absolutely incorporeal

relatively corporal becomes absolutely incorporeal

relatively incorporeal becomes absolutely corporal

or

relative darkness becomes absolute darkness

relative light becomes absolute light

relative darkness becomes absolute light

relative light becomes absolute darkness.

In this phase man's becoming God is

- 1) on the one hand, an outer change (extensive) in the sense that man turns into something outside of him (RULING him), into God, consequently man's opposites turn into God's opposites: a) the relatively corporal and incorporeal, subduing all the relatively corporals and incorporeals, becomes absolutely corporal and incorporeal and b) submitting to all others itself, it becomes absolutely corporal and incorporeal.
- 2) On the other hand, man's becoming God is an inner change (intensive) in the sense that man and God are relatively and absolutely corporal and incorporeal. In this stage, their difference consists in the fact that for one dominant is the relative and for the other the absolute. Consequently, man's becoming God implies the change of the relationships between opposites, establishment of the absolute dominance instead of the relative one

and again in two ways: submitting to the absolute corporal and incorporeal both by expanding and thinning.

b) Man as absolutely corporal and incorporeal returns to himself as such:

relatively corporal becomes relatively corporal

relatively corporal becomes relatively incorporeal

relatively incorporeal becomes relatively corporal

relatively incorporeal becomes relatively incorporeal

or

relative darkness becomes relative darkness

relative darkness becomes relative light

relative light becomes relative light

relative light becomes relative darkness.

These transformations into man as relatively corporal and incorporeal are the outer aspect of man's return in the sense that man turns into something thought identical with him but meanwhile outside of him, into man, i.e. these transformations are not transformations of man's opposites (they are transformations of the relative corporal and incorporeal into man as corporal, controversial).

And it is only in the fourth phase that a more or less complete sameness is achieved. Man as absolutely and relatively corporal and incorporeal becomes absolutely and relatively corporal and incorporeal God.

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 sister peoples accepted the progressive Christian ideology of the time and created national script and literature almost simultaneously... They entered the period of Renaissance simultaneously, 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 is common: both of them are bearers of the Neoplatonic ideology of Christianity (Renaissance). The result of its positive effect is the two great poets’ humanism, free speaking. Even their creative orientations are common. As N. Marr has 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 his source. An insightful person will sure notice traces of the Armenian and Georgian figurative linguomentality of the pagan period in both Narekatsi’s and Rustaveli’s works. For instance, the pagan worship of sun had a deep influence on both Narekatsi’s and Rustaveli’s works.

These 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 is the advancement and defense of ideas of amity of peoples, 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 it is natural. Two neighbor peoples who are tied with thousands of bonds, who existed thousands of years relying on each other could not sacrifice the whole essential to private

religious discords and build their future relationships on it. This is why already in the period of early Renaissance under the influence of the flourishing of humanistic ideas there emerges 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 is the junior son the tenth-century Armenian prominent author and reformer Khosrov Andzevatsi. Since childhood together with his elder brother Hovhannes, he has 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 only three. Secondly, he suggested enlivening church rituals to make them more earthly and effective. Thirdly, he was against the deepening of the feudal exploitation on the part of church, and sluggard and carnal religious leaders' greediness. He even dared to act against the feudal bases of the church. This refers to Khosrov Andzevatsi's refusal to give "presents" to the Catholicos. This "present" was in fact something like an obligatory tax. Bishop Khosrov refused to pay such taxes saying: "Who made me Catholicos's tax-payer?". And as Kirakos Gandzaketsi tells, he tried to justify it in the following way: "There is no need for a bishop to 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 simplifying 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. But he himself writes the following in this concern: "If one of the Armenians adopts the canons of other nations, considering them true, he will be considered as 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 educated and formed 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 himself, 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 filled with ideas of universal salvation and happiness. According to him, the whole mankind is a sailboat tossing about on the sea of mankind's existence, is subject to countless hardships; the great humanist himself was in search of ways to the harbor of happiness, justice, peace for that sailboat. This is 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... 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 adults whose days are ripe and numbered (Pr. 3, B)

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 is why he was accused of being a tsayt. Moreover, he was attempted to be tried but was justified due to a "miracle". Narekatsi lived in such a period of stirred passions that even a slight goodwill, sympathy towards Byzantine or Georgian reality was viewed as a betrayal and heresy and became a reason of 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, the Vahan who was elected the Armenian Catholicos in 968, after Anania Mokatsi. The Armenian celebrated historian Stepanos Orbelayn tells 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 churches, to decorate altars with icons like the Greek and not to say mass without icons. That is 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 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 one belonging to the Georgian church, was the importation of icons from Georgia. The question of icons was one of the important questions of Armenian-Chalcedonian disputes. Thus, Yepimos Atonetsi, Georgian ecclesiastical figure of 10th-11th centuries, tells the following in his book *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 a proponent of moderate reformations, tried to enlarge the usage of icons in church rituals in the purpose of enlivening them and making them more influential and effectual. Narekatsi, as Catholicos Vahan's co-thinker, speaks of the importance of icons in Prayer 76 of his *Book of Lamentations* and emphasizes 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)

⁸² Stepanos Orbelyan, History of Syuniq, Yerevan, "Sovetakan Grogh", 1986, p. 250.

One more fact which confirms the ideological closeness of both Vahan and Grigor Narekatsi and Vahan and other clergymen of the monastery of Narek. The growing interest towards the Georgian reality on the part of the clergy of the monastery of Narek can be accounted for by Catholicos Vahan's coming to Vaspurakan. 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 that history when he could freely extract information about the partition of Armenian and Georgian churches from the collection of *Girk Tghtots* (Book of Letters). And then 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 that order on the part of the monastery of Narek had some concealed purpose. Anania and Grigor Narekatsis were once 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 writes: "...he was considered a schismatic because he wanted to unite the Armenians around Greek and Georgian churches, which were Chalcedonians, and because he borrowed some innovations from them". M. Chamchyan perceives that "unity" in another way, presenting the desired as reality. According to him, Narekatsi had really adopted Chalcedonism: "Now it is known that Catholicoses Eyr and Vahan 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 in advance that Narekatsi’s position in 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 Monophysitism and Dyophysitism, monism and dualism in the chain of negations.

The main question of philosophy, in the form of God and man (=nature) interrelation, has been raised both before the Chastain 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.

Narekatsi was well aware of the debates on Monophysitism and Dyophysitism which lasted several centuries. His ecclesiastical-doctrinal education in the monastery of Narek enabled it. 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 does not view it as a narrow religious-doctrinal superficial problem and he concentrates 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”, is the main but an initial judgment for Narekatsi. Comparing that judgment with the judgment “God is everything”, Narekatsi draws the following conclusion: if Christ, the Son God, as such, is everything, he is also man. Today it is not a secret that contradicting the medieval dogmatism in his *Book of Lamentations*, the great humanist seeks to prove that not only God is Man, but also Man can become God. In this way, Narekatsi deduces the principle of Dyophysitism from the principle of Monophysitism, Christ is God but he is also Man.

The concepts “God” and “Man” undergo a complex process of development in Narekatsi’s *Book of Lamentations*. At first he differentiates these two concepts. God and man are different, God (Christ) is God and man is man. Then this judgment is negated, sublated by the identification of these concepts: Christ is God and man; accordingly, man is man and meanwhile God. However, this judgment is not a final truth either, and sameness is negated by a judgment of a new level.

Christ is God and man to the extent possible by him, divinely, i.e. absolutely, while Man is Man and God to the extent possible by him, i.e. relatively.

These judgments of the phase of differentiation come from the fifth-century philosopher David Anhaght 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 Anhaght’s grounding of that principle and the logical process of deduction but also elaborated that thought through negation. Narekatsi considered that that second differentiation of the concepts “God” and “Man” is not a final truth either and should be negated by a new, a higher-level sameness. This time God’s and man’s potentials, “extents” are identified. Christ is God and man not only to the extent possible by him but also to the extent possible by man (relatively). And man is God and man not only to the extent possible by man but also divinely, absolutely. In this phase Narekatsi does not demand on God to ease 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 without whom there is no movement, no progress* (Pr. 12, B).

The judgments of this phase of identification are not final truths either for Narekatsi. These are negated too. And in this way through the upward steps of the negations of sameness and difference the medieval great thinker goes 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 primary for him was the principle of Monophysitism. This special theoretical approach of his is 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 conditions of the stirring of religious-

doctrinal passions. 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 our two peoples.

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Samvel Poghosyan

My Narekatsi

Translated by Ani Toroyan

Edited by