

# FAYTOUL

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**ARMENIAN YOUTH  
FEDERATION**  
Western United States

## in • flu • ence

/ˈɪnfluəns/  
noun

noun

plural noun: influences

the capacity to have an effect  
on the character, development,  
or behavior of someone or  
something, or the effect itself.  
synonyms: effect, impact;



## Հայդուկ / Haytoug

[www.Haytoug.org](http://www.Haytoug.org)

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# EDITORIAL

## MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

This issue is a collection of people, places and events that have impacted the lives of our contributors. Our writers have shared their stories and opinions with the hope that readers can take away something small from these lessons learned.

We are all changed by something or someone at one point in our lives, and hopefully will seek out from our memory those influences that have changed us for the better. Now, as the youthful spirit of a nation, it is up to us to either *go gentle into that good night* or become influencers of our own.

# ARMENIANS

## Before 301 & *After 1915*

The Armenian identity has grown to recognize itself mainly with two episodes in its sprawling history. Our collective memory begins in 301, ends in 1915 and usually just meanders aimlessly after that. Though the magnanimity of these two events is clear and at this point tacitly understood, they have effectively overshadowed any other facets of cultural activity and obviated the need for us to delve deeper into our own historiography. We are doing ourselves a disservice by self-limiting our national consciousness to two events only.

Most Armenians know that our history is long and replete with a tremendous amount of achievements, innovation, beauty, humor, heroism and survival. Our historic homeland is considered the birthplace of Indo-European language, we have maintained our unique language and cultural identity in the face of truly insurmountable odds (pre- and post-Genocide), and Armenians have contributed to every host country that has had the pleasure of having us as their members.

However, the current problem is that our present generation has found itself mostly oblivious to these points. When asked about our history, the first response is, "Christian...something...something...Genocide...something." This is a problem because the basis of any strong national identity, the kind where its members proactively and consciously moves its country forward, is built upon a knowledge of its own past, where it has come from and all that it is capable of.

The point of this tirade is not national self-aggrandizement. The point is to understand the inspirational path our people have traversed and to use that as motivation to

continue to not only exist but to excel. There are instances of inspiration in every aspect of our past. For example, in the 1925 case US v. Cartozian, Armenians had to fight for their right to citizenship in America due to antiquated racial laws and a severe misunderstanding of what it meant to be Armenian. The fact that Armenians moved on from that point and now comprise one of the most powerful and effective grassroots lobbying organizations in the American political arena should be a powerful motivator in spurring us to further our issues and agenda.

Personally, the last 25 years have proven to be so amazing in scope to me that I have not ceased to be inspired. After over 70 years of living under a stifling totalitarian regime, Armenians not only maintained a very real sense of cultural identity, but also remained on the vanguard of environmental and political activism, championed their rights to self-determination and proved the catalyst for the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

To appreciate and value the current republic means understanding all the factors which led up to its creation. The Republic of Armenia came to exist only after surviving



*General Njdeh addressing an inaugural AYF gathering. 1933.*



an amalgam of events which, realistically and pragmatically speaking, should have eliminated any possibility of creating what is now a growing nation that is progressing daily. Directly on the heels of a devastating earthquake that destroyed entire neighborhoods, Armenia declared independence from the Soviet Union, effectively losing the internal safety net created by the communist economic system. During this period of tumult, the people of Artsakh decided to exercise their own right to self-rule and broke away from the Azerbaijan SSR. The ensuing war found an Armenia which was materially and financially at a severe disadvantage from their Azerbaijani opponents. Yet Armenia won the territories of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic and continued to govern themselves. While Artsakh in a state of war, the Republic of Armenia went through what is known as the “years of darkness and cold.” During this time, there was very little, if any, electricity and running water available, meaning the citizens of Armenia had to survive the winters without heat and the basic comforts of life taken for granted today.

By 2014 Armenia has become a thriving nation that boasts of one of the fastest growing IT sectors in the world and is now a place where more and more young diasporan Armenians are choosing to call home. This was not an accident. This happened as a result of thousands of individuals throughout hundreds of years who dreamt of a place where Armenians could govern themselves and no longer have to live under the rule of foreign dominance. It is a result of a very long, very difficult process.

Tapping into our own past and using it for motivation is not new. The Mekhitarist monks did it before us as did the great writers of the Zartonk period who used Armenian history as a means to wake up the Armenian people from their lethargic slumber and passivity. Unfortunately, neglecting to take the time to learn it and really understand where we have come from is also not new. While working to incubate a sense of national pride and identity within his people, General Garegin Nzhdeh often reflected on this problem writing, “the Armenianhood is still unaware of its depth and that’s why its defeatist. Today’s Arme-



nian lacks self-knowledge. For him [the average Armenian], Armenian history is a sad picture of feebleness and defeat, massacres and no more. People lacking national cognizance will give their new generation wrong education and have wrong policy and strategy.” By failing to understand all that the Armenians have accomplished, we are condemned to default back to the same stale iterations of outdated mentalities.

As such, Armenian history is my inspiration. We are not just Christianity. We are not just the genocide. Knowing exactly what we have survived and gone through eliminates the luxury of taking anything we have for granted. And that includes the diaspora and that includes the Republic of Armenia. Too often I hear people lament and bemoan the current situation of either the diaspora or the Armenian Republic and I cannot help to be dumbfounded by this. They have both been fought for for too long – by people greater than I could ever hope to become – for me to think that I have any right to do anything but continue that fight to strengthen the diaspora and this country in the Caucasus I call home.

*Nora Injeyan*





# Blessed are the Meek: Breaking Stigmas of the Streets

**“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth”, biblical Matthew 5:5,**

was redefined for me in the spring of 2004. I was 21, studying photography in college and shooting a social documentary story about the street vendors of Venice Beach. That’s when I met Timmy, who recited those words to me in an effort to describe his philosophy on life. He was a homeless man, later turned my friend, who forever changed my perspective on humanity.

My story was meant to focus on the subculture of people who belonged to the small enterprise community of street vendors - jewelry makers, artists, musicians and dancers - who make a living spending their days on the Venice strip, producing work and selling them to tourists and visitors alike. They intrigued me and I was eager to gain a more intimate understanding of their lifestyles. This was one of my first stories and everything about the experience made my heart skip a beat. I felt nervous and self-conscious about each step of the process: holding a camera in public, being perceived as a photographer, introducing myself to strangers, entering their personal space with my lens, interviewing people with personal questions, and spending countless hours immersed in other people’s lives. I knew that the fear in this new journey would make me feel alive and fulfilled. They were the experiences I was searching for.

And so I began, apprehensively walking back and forth on the strip. I subtly held my camera and observed from left to right, right to left, discerning potential characters to build up my story. My first few hours quickly turned into

many days spent on the strip. I met people, encountered moments, photographed and interviewed immigrants, gypsies, painters and drug addicts. Every time I went back I felt more comfortable interacting with the locals, waving at familiar faces and meeting friends of friends. I remember naively feeling satisfied with the amount of footage I had collected in my first few days, and believed that I had learned everything this experience had to offer. I was wrong.

It was Sunday, nearing sunset, and drum circle had just begun. I was getting ready to head home when I passed a group of dirty, homeless beggars playing music for change. I slowed down to take a photo and one of them asked me to buy him a drink from the Beach House Market. I hesitated, but knew that an opportunity had just presented itself. He was middle aged, sun wrinkled and covered in dirt, yet I couldn’t resist noticing his kind eyes. They were the kind of eyes you don’t meet often; the ones you know will stay with you for a long time. I bought him a beer and asked his name. It was Timmy.

I sat next to Timmy and his friends, quietly observing and photographing. I thought nothing more of it. As I got up to leave, Timmy turned to me and said “I’ll see you tomorrow”. Those words were all that I needed to hear to further spark my curiosity about this man and his life. And so I went back, spending the next five days with Timmy, listening to his story and coming to understand how another human being just like me could end up so lonely and destitute.

Timmy was a sensitive man. His life stories were traced with faith and courage, despair and empty hopelessness. He revealed stories about intimacy and betrayal, soul mates he had met and lost, as well as good friends he had loved and abandoned. The peak of his spiraling sorrow began





when he was betrayed by his wife and lost a child soon after. Heartbroken, he turned to Sambuca and drank his way to homelessness, withdrawing himself from everyone who offered comfort or support. He started hitchhiking in Florida, traveled through Mexico and the US, and had been sleeping in Venice for the last few years. Timmy lived minimally and boasted about his ability to sustain himself with a few articles of clothing, a pipe and the cross he kept around his neck. Spirituality was among his favorite topics. Every time Timmy discussed his faith, those kind eyes brightened up and a tranquil calmness came over him. Many times Timmy mentioned to me that faith was the only thing he was certain about in this life. No longer feeling hopeless, he had come to terms with his place in society and in this world; a place I was convinced was inferior to my own. But Timmy's faith gave him the confidence to believe that there was nothing more he needed to be doing, because the meek shall inherit the earth.

Some may argue that those biblical words promote a life without striving, and such a life may not be worth living. Before meeting Timmy, I was certainly one of those people. However, within these few days I had already begun questioning my own beliefs. Maybe Timmy wasn't striving for the type of achievement I believed was the norm for all people. As he told story after story, my mind was generating question after question. What were my measures of success? How were they established? Was he a defeated man? Or was I being shortsighted by the fabricated standards of society? By the fifth day, my eyes had been forever opened to the dangers of stigma and stereotyping. I had been a victim of it myself, subconsciously classifying Timmy as a second-class citizen. His calm and humble demeanor, warm heart and friendly manner forced me to look past my judgments, and to finally see us as equals. I was inspired by Timmy's spirituality, minimalism, sense of appreciation, and compassion towards all things. These were values I shared, and seeing Timmy personify them so well inspired me to further see how alike we truly were.

On the first day we met, our differences had sparked my curiosity, and I was unable to see past them. At the end of our fifth day together I couldn't believe how similar we were, as human beings who had felt kindred emotions in different circumstances of life. I had gained a deep understanding about people's individual value and the impartial merit of their diverse beliefs and convictions. In the end, as different as we were, I understood what it meant to have solidarity and to belong to a single human race. Ten years later, I am still grateful to Timmy, the man who taught me about the meek and about humanity.

*Tamar Yardemian Baboujian*

*Note: All photos taken of Timmy were accidentally burned soon after. The author went back to Venice to take new photos of him during the course of writing this article, but Timmy could not be found.*



*Wall mural in Venice.*



*Timmy's bed in front of "Homage to a Starry Night". Venice, CA.*



# Man, woman, and Tree



My desk is always a mess but the postcards I never lose. On a normal day my desk is strewn with a variety of things. Books, business cards, and Olfa blades. Stamps, screws, and safety glasses. Pens, pencils, and rolls of trace paper. Eventually the books get replaced, the business cards get lost, and the blades get dull. Most of the items get used or lost, but three things remain.

Three things can be counted on. Postcards, each with a meaning all its own: images of a man, a woman, and a tree. They take up next to no space; in fact, they're usually hiding right beneath my keyboard. On certain days a corner of one of them may stick out. I slide it back gently with the tip of my finger. I try to act like I don't need them. But I have to admit that they influence my decisions every day.

The first postcard is of a painting by Mel Ramos, in which Superman stands alone. His face looks away, presenting a perfectly two-dimensional profile. He stands ready, looking at something we can't see. His fists are clenched, but his arms are at rest, as though he feels no threat from what's in front of him. His power is infinite. Most photographers capture boxers with their hands up, ready to defend themselves against an imaginary opponent. Not Superman. He has nothing to fear. His confidence is contagious. No one would ever doubt Superman's physical supremacy; but as I grow older I know that some fights are not won by physical strength alone.

The second postcard is of a paper collage by Henry Matisse, entitled 'Woman with Amphora and Pomegranates.' In the twilight of his life, while battling a serious illness, Matisse stumbled upon what he called "a second life." He was unable to paint, and this led him to a new practice: cutting up colored pieces of paper and arranging the pieces into

abstract forms. In this particular piece, the shape of the woman, the arrangement of the parts, the simplicity, they're all extraordinary. But what moves me most is Matisse's bravery: the will to keep producing, after the brush was lost to him forever. Without this bravery, there would have been no second life: "Only what I created after the illness constitutes my real self: free, liberated."

I don't know what compelled me to buy this postcard at the time; after all I didn't know about Matisse's sickness, not even that the painting was created by him. The shape of the woman might have influenced me to be drawn to that painting, but Matisse's resilience in the face of certain devastation has helped me hold on to it for so long. Without Matisse I would not have moved past the foolish childhood yearnings of a superhero's infinite physical strength.

The third postcard bears the image of 'Mulberry Tree,' a painting by Vincent van Gogh. As far as I can tell, this painting is the closest human beings have come to creating life. When I see it, I'm permeated by life. I feel what I feel when I laugh with a friend or embrace the one that I love – like life is filtering through me. Like my life has a source and is a source. It makes me think of the importance of life and what one does with it. I can't help but think that what one creates today has an immense amount of influence on others whether they're aware of it or not.

The art created by these artists influence me every day. They make me think of a day that I'm strong enough to not feel the need to put my hands up. A day when I no longer stop chasing pieces of my dream because I think they're a lost cause. But most of all I dream of the day that I create something through which a person feels alive.

*Sevak Karabachian*



# Արժեւորենք եւ Շարունակենք Հերոսներուն Գործը

1920-1922 թուականներուն իրագործուած Նեմեսիս գործողութիւնը հայ վրէժառուներու կատարմամբ, անհնարին էր որ անշշուկ անցներ եւ ոչ մէկ ազդեցութիւն ունենար ապագային նման գործողութիւններու վերածնունդին:

Հայ Յեղափոխական Դաշնակցութեան անվեհեր վրիժառու բազուկները՝ Արամ Երկանեան, Սողոմոն Թեհլիրեան, Միսաք Թորլաքեան, Արշալիր Շիրակեան, Ստեփան Ծաղիկեան եւ Պետրոս Պողոսեան հաւատարիմ իրենց երդումին՝ անվեհ վեր դասեցին ազգին շահերը ու անտեսելով իրենց ետը՝ անթերի կատարեցին իրենց տրուած պատգամը:

զգեստեցին հայոց ցեղասպանութիւնը կատարող թուրք ճիւղները, ու հասկցուցին թշնամի թուրքին եւ համայն աշխարհին, թէ ով է հայը եւ ինչի է ան ընդունակ՝ հանուն գաղափարին եւ արդարութեան: Այդ վրիժառու երիտասարդները իրենց ուսերուն վրայ վերցուցին միլիոնաւոր նահատակներուն կտակը՝ ուղղուած հայ երիտասարդութեան՝ լի ու լի իրագործելով այդ սրբազան յանձնառութիւնը:

Ահավասիկ 63 տարիներ ետք, դարձեալ աշխարհը ականատես եղաւ թէ ինչպէս հայը անձնագրի է երբ ինդիոյ կը վերաբերի ազգին գոյութեան: Սիմոնը, Սեդրակը, Արամ, Վաչէն, եւ Սարգիսը՝ ազգային դաստիարակութիւնը ստանալով ընթացան իրենց նախնիներուն հետքերով: Անոնք շարունակեցին մարտական վրէժխնդրութիւնը՝ Նկատի ունենալով որ արդարութիւն իրագործուած չէր, թշնամի թուրքը կը շարունակէր իր անտեսումի եւ ուրացման քաղաքականութիւնը: Իսկ «քաղաքակիրթ» աշխարհը անտարբեր կը մնար այդ իրողութեան ընդառաջ:

Լիզպոնի հինգը իր իւրայատուկ պատգամով անգամ մը եւս ի մտի բերաւ եւ վերահաստատեց այն

բոլոր քաղաքական կեղծաւոր գործիչներուն, հայու եւ յատկապէս հայ երիտասարդի վճռականութիւնը եւ անսասան կեցուացքը իր սրբազան դատին նկատմամբ: Ան ապացուցեց թէ բոլոր միջազգային դիւանագիտութիւնները

որոնք կը թեթուին թուրքին շահերուն ուղղութեամբ՝ ի գուր եւ եւ ծախողած՝ քանզի հայ երիտասարդին նոր բարոյական ոյժ ներշնչել, որը մինչ օրս 31 տարիներ անց վառ կը մսան մեր մէջ: Լիզպոնի տղաքը իրենց գոհաբերութեամբ մեծ դեր կատարեցին նոր սերունդին դաստիարակութեան մէջ:

Իբրեւ Հայ երիտասարդաց Դ ա շ ն ա կ ց ու թ ե ա ն անդամ պատքամա է հայ երիտասարդութեան՝ ապրիւնը այնպէս որ մեր գործերը օգտակար դառնան մեր ազգին: աշխատիւնք մեր հայրենիքի հզօրացման համար, որովհետեւ լոկ պ ա հ ա ն ջ ա տ ի ռ ու թ ե ա մ բ չենք կրնար հասնիլ մեր նպատակներուն արանց հզօր հիմքի եւ հայրենիքի: Խօսիւնք հայրենի, պահպանենք մեր լեզուն եւ մշակոյթը, քանզի անոնք կենսական տարր են գոյատեւման: Ինչպէս զարթօնքի ռահվիրայ,

մտաւորական Գարեգին Խաժակ ըսած է, «Որքան ազգի մը լեզուն հարուստ է, այդքան դժուար է այդ ազգը ծուլել»: Այնպիսով մենք արժեւորած կ'ըլլանք այդ հինգ անձնուէր ընկերներուն եւ իրենց նման հերոսներուն յիշատակը: Ապահոված կ'ըլլանք թէ իրենց անձնագրիութիւնը ապարթիւն չէ անցած քանի կայ պայքար, պահանջատիրութիւն, պողպատեայ կամբ եւ հզօր հայրենիք: Փառք ու պատիւ հինգ հերոսներուն, յիշատակնիդ վառ մնայ դիւցազներ:

*Սարոյ Պապիկեան*





# Our Wealth of Warriors

There are many things that have had big influences on my life. Some that I can't consciously recognize, like my childhood teachers perhaps, and some that are undeniably apparent, like my family.

So many individuals, moments and ideas have worked together, influencing us positively and negatively, raising us to be the people we are today. It's not possible to reflect on all the momentous occasions that have impacted me; however as I sit to write this article, there are a select few that might be worth sharing.

The hundreds of youth I've met during my trips to Armenia and Artsakh with the AYF Youth Corps program, forever permeate my thoughts. During my most recent experience in 2013, one of the camp sessions was held in Proshyan, a major village not too far from Yerevan, and truly a place like none other.

The youth of this town were so uniquely proud to be Armenian. It's unfair to compare the level of national consciousness kids here had relative to other camp locations, but the differences were so piercing, I couldn't help notice them.

This community was so honored to be from the same place where Artsakh war heroes, Bedo, Garod and Hrach Mouradyan, were from. All three were buried atop a nearby hill overlooking the town. The monument erected in memory of Garod was only a few feet away from where Mouradyan was shot. Bedo's family opened their home to us so we could touch the last remaining belongings found on his body, including the hat he was known to always wear. Ga-

rod's elderly father visited the camp daily. It was surreal to be so closely surrounded by spirits of men who liberated our Artsakh.

The eldest son of Hrach Mouradyan, the Mayor of Proshyan who was assassinated only three months before we arrived, was one of our campers. For a 14 year old boy whose father was just murdered, he was so composed and in charge. Perhaps he was still in disbelief, or perhaps he had come to terms with reality and was ready to look ahead. Either way, he was mature beyond his years and was clearly invested in the future of that town. A day after jampar ended, he was already planning the first badanegan meeting of the year.

There was another Proshyan boy who I'm likely to never forget. He was among the oldest campers, about 16, tall, skinny and a constant menace. For some reason he was always misbehaving, trying to prove that he can get away with not following the rules we set (possibly because he wanted to lay claim to his turf, which I can respect). Across the dirt road from where we held camp, there was a giant metal crane towering over an abandoned building, for which construction was never completed. As much as we pleaded and tried to reason, this boy would climb to the very top of that crane every day. He was always challenging the counselors and testing our patience. By mid-week we had little choice but to kick him out because he was being too disruptive. The next morning, seeing him lingering in front of our doors in his camp t-shirt with a look of regret, we of course allowed him back in.

It was the last hour of the last day of camp, that I think I





finally understood him. During our traditional song competition, he voluntarily performed a solo. The recording of this brief moment is saved on my desktop and I watch it repeatedly until this day, never growing tired of it. He sings a song dedicated to the memory of Petros Ghevondyan (Bedo). As this boy stood in front of his group, facing all of us who had punished him to no avail, his impenetrable demeanor came undone. His fragility as a young boy living in a difficult reality, his sorrow for the losses he knows were endured, and his determination for a better tomorrow were all exposed as he sang this song. He was living in that song, nothing else mattered but singing it as best he could out of respect for something so much bigger than himself. I realized his character may be a blessing to him, because in less than a year he will be a soldier himself, continuing the work of Bedo, Garod and Hrach, along a very hostile and dangerous border.

The pedestal on which I put this town is a result of my own observations during a brief time spent there. It may be naive or idealistic, but I hold onto it for good reason. Proshyan is a special town, and its youth are important to me. The place is a microcosm of the perfect, strong, proud Armenian nation that I imagine, and the people are the ones that will get us there.

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**In our organizational life**, there has been a constant concern with the absence of female representation and involvement. Since the establishment of the ARF, and still 125 years past, this scarcity of women among our ranks and leadership has been undeniable. As a result, we often hear about how the younger generations, of women especially, are hesitant to join because of the intimidation they feel when attending a meeting in a room full of older men.

While these feelings of hesitation are natural, my own experiences have been surprisingly different.

There are a select few women who we see in those same meeting rooms, so tactfully making important political decisions, unfazed by the sea of men among which they work. It is this handful of leading women who truly intimidate me. Having crossed paths with some of these best of the best over the years, I have always been left in awe of their excellence. Their excellence is what scares me, but with a type of fear that is so motivational that your heart pounds at the thought of not reaching the high standards they have set for you. These ungerouhis are the ones I want to impress the most, whose approval weighs heaviest and who have me thinking twice before doing or saying anything.

No one can command a room like Lilit Galstyan did the first time I met her. She had me pacing around after her as she put her outfit together for a television interview, while telling me I have to tutor her in English, because while her English is almost perfect, she only settles for ABSOLUTE perfection. I had never questioned my own English language skills as much as I did in that moment.

Even the women I've been able to work with more closely or see regularly, possess so much finesse and fortitude that, despite our frequent interactions they still keep me on my toes. These women dictate Hye Tahd policy, the future of our schools, and aid to the homeland; they serve as examples by being among the first who repatriated to Armenia. These rare, commanding and exceptional women make me want to absorb everything they have to offer.

Therefore, while I hope our ranks be filled with more intelligent and brave young women, the severe gender disproportions in our party can be deceptive; they do not do justice to the impactful force brought on by the few women who are present, and whose role should never be discounted.

Somewhere along the intersections of Proshyan's youth and our female power-houses in the ARF is where I understand my national influences today. These two very distinct yet indispensable components of our nation speak to the wealth of warriors we possess, and I am so grateful to serve among them.

*Sanan Shirinian*





# Arshille Gorky... An Artist's Inspiration

by Lisa Arakelian

*Note: The author, Lisa Arakelian, is an undergraduate student at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), majoring in Art History.*

**I**t has often been said that historical childhood developments affect a child and his future in enormous ways. A strong believer of this philosophy is literary critic Eric Erikson, a man whose own personal identity shaped his beliefs throughout his entire life. Erikson explained that accepting ones historical past was a necessity to be able to move on. For Arshille Gorky, a famous and admired artist, his past was an inspiration, by playing a major role in the art that he produced.

Arshille Gorky was born Vosdanik Adoian, on April 15, 1904, in Khorkum, a small village on the southeast shore of Lake Van in the Van province of Armenia. Vosdanik was named after his mothers birthplace, Vosdan, the ancient Armenian city situated on the southernmost shore of Lake Van. In 1908, his father Setrag Adoian emigrated to the United States to avoid conscription into the Turkish Army. Many Armenians fled at this time to avoid the unjust harassment by the Turks. Setrag, left behind a wife and four children. On leaving, he left Vosdanik a pair of red Armenian slippers; these slippers were later found in a number of his paintings, perhaps used as an attempt to retrace his history.

In the years following, Arshille attended many schools where he studied writing and drawing. His interest in drawing stemmed from his childhood, when his mother, who felt a deep attachment to art, would encourage him by giving him money to purchase pencils and paper. Gorky was raised by his mother, and was therefore involved with art from a very young age.

Between 1914, to 1915, the genocide of the Armenian people perpetrated by the Turkish government began. For four years Gorky and his family struggled for survival. They were quickly forced to leave their home. With the naive hope of returning, they buried their belongings underground, and took with them a small amount of money, and only a few days supply of bread. They never returned. In the fall of 1916, his two sisters fled to America, while he stayed behind with his mother and other sister. Soon conditions worsened. In 1919, his mother, to whom he was extremely attached, died from starvation, at the young age of 39. This traumatic loss was one Gorky would never overcome.

In February of 1920, Arshille and his sister boarded a ship to Athens and soon arrived at Ellis Island. His quest for identity soon led him to assume a new name: Arshille Gorky, and to seek a career in art in New York. His new surname was adopted by Maxime Gorky, a well-known Russian writer. In Russian 'Gorky' means 'bitterness,' or 'the bitter one.' He often spoke of himself as Maximes cousin. This, of course, was not true. Perhaps he was



A self-portrait

searching for some sense of 'belonging'—family, for him, was now only an abstraction.

Though the post-war era was not very promising for artists, he chose to remain in that field and struggle through the hardships. He belonged to a movement known as "Abstract Expressionists," where he presented his subjects in a rich variety of disguises, transforming shapes and human figures to abstract and organic images. His Armenian heritage always remained crucial to him, and this was evident through his art. He continuously desired to return to the 'old country,' a wish that was never fulfilled.

Gorky's painting career flourished as he grew more and more popular for his innovative style. In 1927, he painted "An Artist and His Mother," a memorable work that became one of his most famous. Here, he depicts himself and his mother. An emotionally intense image. The painting, was taken from a photograph taken in 1912, that was going to be sent to his father in America. Here, Gorky is seen wearing the famous red slippers his father had left for him. Twenty-five years after the photo was





taken, Gorky relived the hope and anger on a canvas. This painting strongly reveals a quest for contact with his own past. There exists a sense of alienation and sadness in both the photograph and the painting.

Throughout his painting career, he returned to his roots. Gorky's ethnic and national past formulated his identity. His memories of his childhood came to people through a canvas. His expression for the love of his country turned profound when he returned to "nature paintings."

In 1941, he painted "The Garden at Sochi," referring to his birthplace in Armenia. This specific garden was located near his home, at a place where he often played. Gorky disguised and abstracted all natural forms, (trees, birds, flowers...) to capture the essence of a garden, without actually depicting it.

This new interest in "nature painting" focused on returning to biological roots—perhaps referring to his own roots, and depicting some sort of growth and development. (Similar to his own growth and development outside of Armenia.)

For "The Plow and the Song," a title of another painting from his "native period," Gorky writes:

*"...I have been occupied in drawing the Armenian plows with which we used in our Adoian fields near our house... You can't imagine the fertility of forms that leap from our Armenian plows, the plows our ancestors used for thousands of years in toll and gaiety, hardships and poverty... I smell the apricots bot on our orchard trees and they move for me in dances of the old... and the songs, our ancient songs of the Armenian people, our suffering people... this I*

*am painting, and I'm sure you will appreciate it ..."*

The early 1940's for Arshille Gorky, was a time when he emerged as a major innovative figure in American painting. He was passionate about Armenian heritage and was also engaged in a monumental struggle to create a new direction in painting. He often recalled the times when his mother would take him to her family's fifth-century ancestral *vank* (an apostolic church and monastery complex), to shrines and tombs in the area and to the church of the Holy Cross on the Island of Akhtamar. Although Gorky may have been too young to have formed more than a vague impression of these treasures, the memory of them stayed with him throughout his lifetime.

Arshille Gorky never escaped his past. His concept of identity was tracing back to his birthplace, and reliving the love and the freedom of his homeland. He was forever haunted and obsessed with the past. Did he feel guilty for having survived? He was too young, and unable to defend himself against the brutal attack on his family and his people. He was unable to shield his loving mother from the harsh realities that existed.

On July 21, 1948, at the peak of his career, Gorky took his own life. A growing poet, as well as an influential artist, he was a man who had experienced extreme suffering and poverty that he could not separate himself from. He could not find a long-lasting harmony within himself, and therefore, chose to end his life.

Gorky recorded his life through his art and left a legacy behind for people to learn and understand. It is true to say that he lived a fragmented identity. He was an Armenian living in exile, driven away from his homeland and forced apart from his family. Gorky was given a new identity, an identity he could not live to the fullest.

Read articles from AYF Alumni.  
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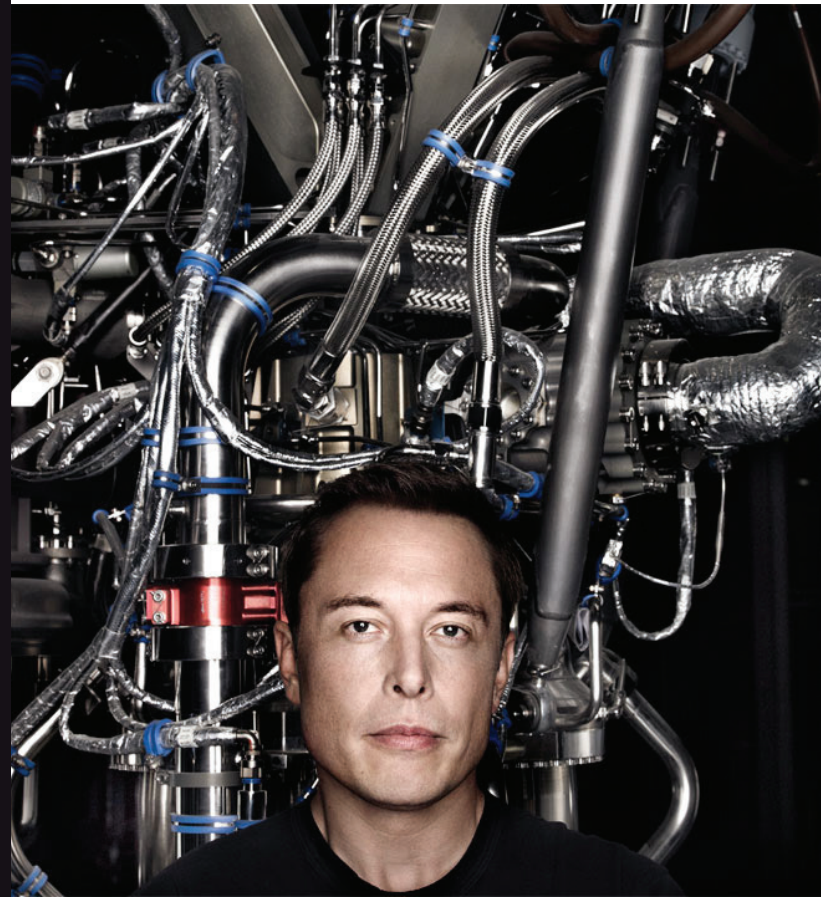


# Ascend The Throne

What could cause us to turn our heads? Us. A civilization of people as old as us. Us. Who claim to have invented most modern technology (and, as it turns out, we have the patents to prove it). Us. Who created the first Stonehenge, brewed the first beer, smashed the first grapes of virgin wines, sewed the first shoe...us. **What would cause us to turn our heads?**

How about a man who founded an automobile company with technology all experts doubted would propel a car more than a mile? What could one learn from the same man who created a higher standard for humans to live by? From the same man, what can be learned from his actions, or when he says: "If something is important enough, even if the odds are against you, you should still do it." What if that man, ready at the starting line – turned on his engine and went at a speed of 25,000 MPH passed his skeptics full of doubt and disbelief. Would anything stop this man? Would anything stop Elon Musk?

A dense description of this polymath's accomplishments aside – Elon Musk has been known as the "real life" Tony Stark (a.k.a – Iron Man). Not because he wears a suit of armor – but because he makes the impossible become reality while an army of naysayers tell him it can't be done. Musk has recently made headlines for his innovations in the auto industry as the creator and founder of TESLA motors – a revolutionary company that challenges the conventions of classic auto-mechanics and powers its sleek and luxurious cars with a battery that can go nearly 300 miles strong in one charge. 50 years ago, when one held a flashlight in their hand – would they have ever thought the same system of mechanics using a switch and battery could propel a two ton automobile to 60 m.ph in 4.2 seconds? That is the same speed as a Lamborghini sports car, the most coveted sports car in the world. But it was done, accomplished, and left a crowd of doubting bodies speechless. This is where



the act of being ambitious has its day.

In an active diaspora like what the Armenian community has, a word like "denial," and feelings such as doubt are never far from a daily occurrence. It's an immigrant mentality, a post-Soviet mentality, and it's deuce been hardened by the annual battle to gain recognition of atrocities passed. We have a lot going against us as a community, as a people – and 3,000 miles over – as a nation. That's the outside world on top of our shoulders we have to shake off. Yet, what of our own burdens? We have naysayers among our ranks. From those holding protest signs next to us, to those in our community centers and our TV personalities. It seems unbearable to have so much riding against each one of us when it's written out like that. For the doubtful, the flame flickers. For others – like Elon Musk – it's just the right amount of darkness to understand why the light is so important.

There is going to be a time in your lives – no, really, I mean you, you Armenian-American individual – when you're going to have to make a choice. It's going to take a long time for that choice to wither and die, or grow and blossom – but the day will come. The choice is whether you want to be Armenian in this life, or not. The choice is how much of the Armenian heritage you're willing to preserve through your actions, and how much you're willing to give up. It's a fair question. It's a rendition of that question that Elon Musk had to answer before his endeavors led him to found another company that questioned the very ideas of humanity's place among the stars. He decided that there was a place for humans in space, and that it wasn't a luxury – it was a necessity for human life to explore the cosmos. So he founded the first commercial space company: Space X





If you think you might have it bad, having your parents or friends be your mountains of skeptics during your choice – think about Elon Musk, and how he had to climb a planet of doubt and challenge the world's most powerful space agency at the summit to get what he needed – what he believed was the right step towards progress – done.

If this is the choice that you eventually decide to take, to include your heritage, and embrace it, then look to innovators and influences within our community. Life for those who accept their reality, become proud of their decisions. When they embrace their own actions, and stand by their choices, our kingdom full of kings sees that confidence, and is absorbed into it. For an empire full of kings and queens, we must set the precedent, we must battle for greatness.

No one else will do it for us.

If you're not on board yet, then pay attention before you get on the train. Take the journey with programs such as: Birthright Armenia, AYF Youth Corps, Repat Armenia, the Allen and Sose Foundation, Armenia Tree Project and One-Armenia. Learn from the paths they have paved, and either widen the path, or create your own. But whatever you do, be masterful in its execution.

Take initiative and know that there is more power and success in our community beyond the limits of a "heritage night." Look to: Michael Aram, Karoun Dairies, VoiceBoard, GugoCo, Karas Wines, Ameria Bank, TUMO center, PicsArt, ArmTab and many more companies that have been started to cater to the community, or by members of our community. Members who have made the choice to embrace their fate and steer it where they choose boldly.

There is a fundamental similarity between Armenians and the philosophies of Elon Musk. We can live a better life. We can live in a world to our making, and to our standards. We can live in a time when innovation, ingenuity, and collaboration can meet, and craft wondrous things together to initiate awe, and accomplish excellence. We can. It has been done. It will be done. The question remains – where will you be when the rocket ship rolls to launch? In the spaceship, or watching from a mile away?

*Patrick Bairamian*



# Մենք Մեզմով Հպարտանանք...

## Զնկատուող Գործիչներ

Սովորութիւն է մեր Հայ գաղութներէն ներս երիտասարդութեան քննադատել: Այս իրականութիւնը ալ աւելի ներկայ է մեր Ամերիկեան եւ Գանատական շրջանակներուն մէջ: Ընդհանրապէս մեր ծնողները կամ ղեկավարները գաղթած են Միջին Արեւելքէն եւ կը սիրեն բաղդատել այսօրուայ երիտասարդներուն Միջին Արեւելքի նախկին երիտասարդ սերունդին հետ: Միշտ կը լսենք թէ որքան ըրածնիս բաւարար չէ, բաւարար Հայերէն չենք խօսիր, կամ թէ շատ «պարապ» բաներով կը զբաղուինք: Այո՛, մեծ մաս մը մեր Հայ երիտասարդներէն որ կը բնակին Հիւսիսային Ամերիկայի մէջ բաւարար ջանք չեն թափեր Հայ մշակոյթը ողջ պահելու համար: Քննադատութեան ցանկը երբեք չի վերջանար: Բայց մեր մեծաթիւ Հայ երիտասարդներուն մէջ ունինք ապագայի հերոսները, ունինք մեր ապագայի ղեկավարները եւ ունինք մեր ԱՅՍՕՐՈՒՄՅՅ յեղափոխականները: Պ. Սեւակը կ'ըսէ «Մարդ կայ՝ ելել է շալակն աշխարհի... մարդ կայ՝ աշխարհն է շալակած տանում:» Մեր գործօն ու կամաւոր Հայ երիտասարդը այդ մարդն է որ աշխարհն է շալակած տանում: Երբ մեր գաղութները կեդրոնական միայն ու միայն այդ անձերուն վրայ որ չեն աշխատիր, կը մոռնան յիշել անոնց որ երիտասարդ տարիքէն գրեթէ կեանքերնին նուիրած են Հայապահպանման: Այս դարուս, շատ դիւրին է ծուլուիլ, մանաւանդ այդ երիտասարդներուն որ կ'ապրին Հիւսիսային Ամերիկա: Մեր քոյրերն ու եղբայրները որ կը բնակին Միջին Արեւելքի մէջ բախտաւոր են: Արաբ եւ Իսլամ ազգի մէջ ապրիլը պատճառ եղած է ծուլումի թիւը մանր պահել: Մեր Հիւսիսային Ամերիկայի երիտասարդները աւելի փորձութեան ենթակայ են: Ունինք բազմաթիւ երիտասարդներ



որ ոչ թէ միայն չեն ծուլուած, ապա կը շալկեն իրենց գաղութները, ուսերնին վրայ: Փառք մեր գործօն երիտասարդներուն...մեր երիտասարդները որ իրենց սուղ ժամերը կը նուիրեն գաղութի աշխատանքի համար...այդ երիտասարդները որ կը դառնան մեր պատանիներուն մեծ քոյրերն ու եղբայրները: Այդ երիտասարդը կը պատրաստէ մեր ապագայ սերունդը: Ունինք երիտասարդներ որ ամիսներ կ'անցընեն Հայաստան բայց ոչ թէ իբր զբօսաշրջիկ, այլ օգտակար միջոցներով-օրինակ՝ Birth-right Armenia, Armenia Tree Project, AYF Youth Corps (զանազան երկիրներ կը կազմակերպեն այսպիսի ճամբար Արեւմտեան Ամերիկայի ՀԵՂԻ օրինակին հետեւելով) եւ AYF Internship: Այս երիտասարդները կամաւորաբար կը մասնակցին զանազան ծրագիրներու, իսկ բոլոր ծրագիրներուն վերջնական արդիւնքը կը ստեղծէ ջերմ կապեր երիտասարդին եւ Հայրենիքին միջեւ: Իսկ կան այդ անձերը որ ուրախութեամբ եւ քաջութեամբ կ'որոշեն ներգաղթել: ճոխութեան մէջ ծնած եւ ապրած են, բայց միայն ու միայն կ'երագեն օրական Հայկական օդ շնչելու մասին: Նաեւ կան երիտասարդներ որ կը ստեղծեն եւ կը մասնակցին ծրագիրներու որ կը





գտնուին Հիւսիսային Ամերիկայի մէջ: Մեր շրջանին յայտնի՝ «AYF Camp»-ը կը ստեղծէ ջերմ կապեր մեր սփիւռքի ընկեր եւ ընկերուիներուն միջեւ: Զարաչար կը պայթարին ծուլումի դէմ եւ Հայապահպանման գործը կը յարատեւեն:

Ընդհանրապէս, ժողովուրդը ծայրայեղ օրինակներ կը սիրէ օգտագործել իբր ներշնչման նշան: Այո՛, այս օրինակները կարելորդ եւ տպաւորիչ են: Համաձայն եմ որ շատ օգտակար է ճանչնալ «Nelson Mandela»-ի կամ «Mahatma Gandhi»-ի փորձառութիւններն ու խօսքերը: Բայց ինչո՞ւ նոյն խանդավառութեամբ ուշադրութիւն չենք դարձներ մեր երիտասարդներուն որ ողջ կը պահեն մեր սփիւռքի Հայ գաղութները՝ մասնաւորաբար Հիւսիսային Ամերիկայի մէջ: Մեր ամենօրեայ բազմազբաղ սովորութեան ընթացքին կը մոռնանք թէ որքան անպաճոյճ խօսք կամ շարժումնք մը կարելիութիւնը ունի անձի մը ցնցելու: Առանց զգալու, պարզ եւ սովորական պահերը որ գործօն Հայ երիտասարդը կ'անցընէ Հայ պատանիի կամ երեցի հետ շատ մեծ տպաւորութիւն ունի: Երեխային օրինակ կը դառնայ եւ այդ երեխան կը սկսի հետեւիլ

**Բայց ինչո՞ւ նոյն  
խանդավառութեամբ  
ուշադրութիւն  
չենք դարձներ մեր  
երիտասարդներուն որ ողջ  
կը պահեն մեր սփիւռքի  
Հայ գաղութները**

իր բոլոր շարժումներուն: Երբ երիտասարդը երեցի դեմը ելլէ, այդ երեցը կրկին կ'ոգեւորուի եւ աւելի աշխոյժաբար կը շարունակէ իր գործը Հայ գաղութն ներս: Մեր երիտասարդները որ կը գերադասեն հայապահպանումը, պետք է բոլոր Հայ պատանիներուն եւ անոնց ծնողներուն ներշնչման խորհրդանիշը ըլլան: Անձնական փորձառութիւն ունենալով, կրնամ բոլորին վստահացնել որ գործօն երիտասարդութիւն ունենալը անհրաժեշտ է: Պետք է քաջալերենք այս կամաւորները որ յարատեւեն իրենց սուրբ աշխատանքը: Յիշենք Գ. Նժդեհին խօսքը «Եթէ ուզում ես տեսնել ազգի մը ապագան, նայիր նրա երիտասարդութեան:»

*Լիւսի Տիշոյեան*

# THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN THE ARMENIAN NATION



a consideration of these criticisms is imperative for the understanding of Armenian faith, nation, politics and their intersections.

The fact that the Armenian Apostolic Church has had a major influence in the history of the Armenian people can hardly be denied. Armenians are historically identified (by themselves and therefore by scholars) as an ethno-religious community [1], meaning religion and ethnic identity are historically very much intertwined for the Armenian people. In the pre-Christian as well as Christian eras, religion has not been confined to prayer and holidays, but has been part of every form of cultural expression – dance, song, intellectual tradition, architecture, art, and so on. Since its founding in 301, the Armenian Apostolic Church has been a powerful force in the development of the Armenian nation and its people. While it is an expression of the universal Christian faith, it bears the imprint of a particular nation and is the expression of that nation's understanding of their existence – a collective people's worldview, regarding relationships with other human beings, the universe, and the divine. It has influenced and been influenced by, formed and formed by, the Armenian way of life. Equally important to a nation's cultural expression is its political expression, and the Church has also been a powerful socio-political force, a point that will be the primary focus of this article. The great contributions to Armenian thought and culture, as well as political destiny, on the part of the Church, have been the subject of as much praise as criticism, and I hope to discuss the former elsewhere, but focus mostly on the latter here. Many charges are brought against the Church, for their role in Armenian history, and for the fate of Armenians due to their Christianity, and so

Proceeding within a framework of historical chronology, the first of these is the argument that the polytheistic tradition of the pre-Christian Armenians was purely indigenous, while Christianity was a foreign colonizing force imposed upon Armenians. The first problem with this reasoning is that it presumes a “pure” Armenian religion where there was none. Religion and spirituality are never formed in a vacuum, but rather through cultural exchange of narratives and ideas. Though Armenia had a distinct mythology and pantheon, it borrowed heavily from Zoroastrianism (e.g. Mihr = Mithra, Aramazd = Ahura-Mazda, Anahid = Anahita). There is a good deal of scholarship on the connections between Armenian, Persian, Greek, and Assyrian deities and rituals, but even if Armenia was the first civilization, it does not mean that we're the sole source of inspiration for religious imagination in the world, while those around us have not had any influence on us. Unlike their neo-pagan counterparts, Pre-Christian Armenians thought of religion not merely as an expression of national identity, but rather, as an understanding of their existence and of reality. They were prepared to exchange their ideas with those around them and construct their worldview according to their reason and imagination. They approached truth the way the later medieval Arab philosopher al-Kindi would prescribe, “We must not be ashamed to admire the truth or to acquire it, from wherever it comes. Even if it should come from far-flung nations and foreign peoples.” [2] In this way, many Armenians were compelled by a new account, or Word (Logos in Greek means account, word, reason (Բան in Armenian)), and thus set up Christian communities in Karin, Taron, and so on. The English writer G.K. Chesterton says, insightfully, “Paganism... is an attempt to reach the divine reality through the imagination alone.” [3] The pre-Christian Armenians were humbled by the natural forces around them, which sometimes bestowed life and good fortune, and other times brought death and havoc. Later, they began to view the world as ordered, and this made for a smooth transition from the idea of a supreme deity ruling a pantheon of other dei-



**Had we remained a pagan people with Zoroastrian ties, Armenians would likely have been consumed by Iranian culture, if not the Persian Empire directly.**



ties, to the concept of a single divine loving Creator who ordains and sustains the laws of nature. Thanks to the sphere of influence of Hellenism, Platonic metaphysics would have been long since acculturated by Armenians, when Christianity, which was in many ways a synthesis of the Greek and Jewish traditions, made its way to Armenia. The sloppy theorizers of this alleged colonization conspiracy also often overlook the fact that it was not Gregory the Illuminator who brought Christianity to Armenia. Agathangelos' account bears witness of the apostle Thaddeus' missionary activity in Armenia in the first century A.D. In addition, contemporary scholarship cites that "the early appearance of Christianity coming to Armenia from Palestine by way of Syria and Mesopotamia is equally beyond doubt. The second century African church father Tertullian already listed the Armenians among the people who had received Christianity, and the mid-third-century letter of Bishop Dionysios of Alexandria to an Armenian bishop named Meruzanes indicates a sizable community." [4] Thus, Christianity was from the beginning, an organic development of the spiritual lives of the Armenian people, through cultural exchange and the pursuit of existential understanding. And, far from being hierarchically imposed, it first took root among the people. Any further doubt of this can be countered with the multitude of accounts of early Christians as non-violent evangelists through the power of

their spoken word and compassionate disposition, who were martyred for exercising their yet unacknowledged right to free speech.

Another favorite critique inclined towards our pagan past, says that because of our Christian faith, the Armenian people have suffered centuries of otherwise avoidable suffering, and that we'd be better off if we'd never become Christian. A quick consideration would reveal I think, that in this alternate history, not only is it unlikely that Armenians would be a strong and prosperous nation, but it's unlikely that Armenians would be at all. Had we remained a pagan people with Zoroastrian ties, Armenians would likely have been consumed by Iranian culture, if not the Persian Empire directly. The second likelihood is that we would have been converted anyways by Imperial Byzantine Christendom, and without a strong cultural backbone, would have plausibly assimilated into Byzantine culture. And if we somehow managed to maintain that supposedly "pure" Armenian paganism until the 7th century, the forces of Islam would have probably swept us, and with the importance that faith places on Arabic, we wouldn't have our own alphabet either. It's possible Armenian might have survived colloquially, but our language and alphabet were what drove our strong national character. These aren't mere hypotheticals either. These were actual threats Armenia faced and sur-

vived, thanks to forces of resistance such as Mashdots and the Mamigonians.

A century after adopting Christianity, Armenia faced the ever increasing problem of cultural assimilation. Since there was no Armenian script, the Gospel was studied in Persian, Greek, and Syriac, and Armenian literary culture was expressed in these languages. When a people cease to express their cultural identity through language, and the primary mode of expression is through another language, that culture assimilates ever quickly. That is why English culture, for example, didn't form its distinct identity until the second millennium, when it began to form a literary tradition, though arguably, Old English formed between the 5th and 9th centuries. In addition, it was difficult for people like Mesrob Mashdots to implement Christian teaching, due to the constant need for translation and interpretation. Thanks to the leadership of the Armenian Church, years of journeying and inquiry, Mashdots' genius and talent, and a touch of divine inspiration, 405/6 A.D. saw the discovery of the Armenian alphabet, and the monumental works of his successors made the 5th century the golden age of Armenian literature, or *սկզբնային*. The result of Mashdots' work, says the 7th century pope St. Martin, "was to separate forever the Armenians from the other peoples of the East, to make of them a distinct nation... To Mesrob we owe the preservation of the language and literature of Armenia; but for his work, the people would have been absorbed by the Persians and Syrians, and would have disappeared like so many nations of the East." [5] About half a century later, a more direct threat came from Sassanid Persian King Yazdegerd II. When he attempted to destroy Armenian churches, sent Zoroastrian magi to Armenia, and build temples in their place, it was the people who rebelled, and the commander in chief, or *sparabed*, Vartan Mamigonian, who came to their aid in 451. The notion that Armenians were somehow kept weak because of their Christian commitments, disregards the fact that for centuries, we had standing armies alongside a church that blessed its soldiers before battle. Quite the contrary, we had a chivalric code of honor, much like the Samurai in Japan and the knights of European Christendom, except centuries before them. In his study of this code of honor, Armen Aivazyan, a madenataran researcher, says, "This code of honor, in hierarchical order, requires selfless loyalty to: (1) their fatherland, the Armenian "world," country and independent kingdom; (2) chivalric honor; (3) the king as the most important state institution of Armenia; (4) the people of Armenia, all of its inhabitants, irrespective of their social status; (5) the Christian faith, church and clergymen; (6) family; (7) their kinsmen; (8) their comrades-in-arms." [6] The existence of a military code of this style, if it reflects the warrior cultures of the knights and the samurai, as Aivazyan argues, shows that while the Church demanded virtue from its warriors, this promoted rather than stifled a strong warrior culture. Though Vartan was martyred and the battle of Ava-

rayr was lost, his nephew Vahan Mamigonian carried on the resistance, until 484, when the Persians signed the Nvarsak Treaty, guaranteeing religious freedom to Armenia. These instances are clearly national victories and not merely victories for the Church.

Thus, the Armenian Apostolic Church struggled to assert a uniquely national identity for the Armenian people, where other forces, such as the ever-divisive *nakharars*, would have directed Armenia towards assimilation into the powerful surrounding empires. The subsequent centuries also saw ceaseless pressure to convert the Armenians to Eastern Orthodoxy and to be consumed by Byzantine culture, but the Church was able to resist this in large part because of its strong national character. In fact, the accusation from Roman Catholics has traditionally been this very charge – that the Oriental Churches have always been too national, but this is the only natural way for a people as a nation to develop, and is the reason why places like Ireland, for example, are both very Christian and very Irish, rooted in their historic cultural traditions, with connections to their Celtic and Druidic past as we are with our own. This is why neither our church, nor others', has raised doctrinal issues with the dances, symbols (*հաւերժութեան նշան*), holidays, and other links to our pagan past. Far from being mere pragmatic political moves, these were seen as meaningful expressions of our relationship to the Divine. And while it is true that Armenians have suffered much for maintaining a distinct identity from those around them, after all is said and done, the Armenian nation can straighten its back and take a cue from Frank Sinatra, and say, "I did it my way."

*Khachig Joukhajian*

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(For further account of the role of the Armenian Church in the nation's history, await future articles in the works.)

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# FOREIGN GARDENS

You've come to learn the excitement  
of seeing the name of your next destination  
shining bright on the next arriving train.

There is pain in leaving but the pain is worse in waiting.

And while you often find yourself debating  
in the dreadful autumn heat  
you find that truth is always buried  
in the ground beneath your feet.

And the songs seemed sweet  
until you sang them to a crowd that could not hear  
the vibrato of a longing for her golden, shedding  
autumn leaves.

And the operratta makes them crumble  
dry and broken on the floors,  
and then the snow comes down to blanket them  
with the purity of her winter's cold.

The folding mountains open up in spring  
and the melodies of ancients ring with every blossom  
she may sing the song to bring us out of the wrong soil.

It boils down to roots in foreign gardens,  
the older you get the more you harden,  
your trunk gets heavy with too many things,  
and you no longer hear the songs she sings.

We've been planted in  
a foreign garden,  
And they've watered us  
with all these needs.  
We're growing in  
this foreign garden  
Where we've learned  
to hurt before it bleeds  
We're dying in  
this foreign garden  
Filling up our trunks  
with things,  
And we'll be buried in  
this foreign garden—  
hard and heavy,  
filled with tears.

*Raffi Semerdjian*

Վերջերս սկսայ կարդալ մեծ հօրս գրած գիրքը՝ որուն մէջ Պապուկը (մեծ հայրս) գրած է իր կեանքին յուշերը: Ինչ սքանչելի կեանք մը ապրած է ան: Գիրքէն չի բաւարարուելով՝ սկսայ նաեւ հօրմէս յաւելեալ տեղեկութիւն խնդրել անոր մասին: Այս առիթով, հայրս պատմեց թէ Պապուկը, պատանի տարիքին ձգած է Սուսա Լեռը եւ գացած Երուսաղեմի Սրբոց Յակոբեանց Ժառանգաւորաց Վարժարան՝ ուր Յակոբ Օշականի շունչով ստացած է իր հայեցի դաստիարակութիւնը: Ան վարժարանը աւարտելէն ետք ուխտած է ազգին ծառայել, ընտրելով ուսուցչական ասպարէզ: Հայապահպանումը իբրեւ պայքարի դրօշ պարզած՝ Պապուկը կեանքը նուիրած է սերունդներու դաստիարակութեան, հաւատալով որ այդ է լաւագոյն ձեւը յաղթահարելու թուրքին հայաջնջման ծրագրին: Այս ընթացքին առիթը ունեցած է քարիւղի ընկերութեան մը մէջ աշխատելու, սակայն ան մերժած է, նախընտրելով ծառայել ազգային դաստիարակչական գործին՝ շատ համեստ վճառումով, քան աշխատիլ օտար հաստատութեան եւ միջավայրի մէջ՝ նիւթական շատ աւելի գրաւիչ պայմաններով: Եւ այսպէս, զբաղած է հայեցի դաստիարակչութեամբ, նախ՝ իբրեւ ուսուցիչ եւ ապա՝ իբրեւ ազգային դպրոցի տնօրէն: Իր այդ որոշումով, իր բազմանդամ ընտանիքը ապրած է համեստ վիճակով, սակայն ան իր բարոյական պարտականութիւնը կատարած է հանդէպ նորահաս սերունդին եւ ազգին:

Մեծ հայրս եւ իր մտածելակերպը իւրայատուկ չէին այդ ժամանակաշրջանին: Իր ամբողջ սերունդը՝ ցեղասպանութենէն վերապրողներու զաւակները, նման մտայնութեամբ ապրեցան իրենց կեանքերը սփիւռքի մէջ: Իրենց ծնողները Տեր Զօրի անապատէն անցած ու հասած էին Սուրիա եւ Լիբանան՝ մերկ, բոպիկ, անօթի եւ հիւանդ վիճակով, առանց տեղական լեզուին ծանօթ ըլլալու: Անոնք տարիներու ընթացքին իրենց տոկոսնութեամբ եւ աշխատասիրութեամբ կարողացած էին հիմնել

հայկական գաղութներ օտար երկիրներու մէջ: Շինած էին դպրոցներ, եկեղեցիներ եւ ակումբներ եւ իրենց ժրաջան աշխատանքով պահած էին այս բոլորը, որպէսզի նորահաս սերունդը հայ մեծնար եւ պահպանէր մեր լեզուն ու մշակոյթը: Մեծ հօրս սերունդը մեծցաւ իրենց ծնողներուն կրած Եղեռնի ցաւերով ու յիշատակներով, ինչպէս նաեւ թշուառութեամբ եւ աղքատութեամբ: Իրենց ծնողներուն նման, անոնք եւս մանկութիւն չունեցան. պատանի տարիքէն ստիպուած եղան նետուիլ կեանքի ասպարէզ: Հակառակ այս բոլորին, հայութեան դժմ նետուած բոլոր մարտահրաւերները վերցուցին: Իրենց մէջ երթալէն զօրացաւ դիմադրողականութիւնը եւ կապուածութիւնը իրենց հայկական արմատներուն եւ հայ լեզուին, մշակոյթին ու կրօնքին: Յարատեւելու կամքը եւ վրեժ լուծելու ճիգերը դրուեցան հայապահպանման գործին մէջ: Իրենք զիրենք դրին շատ ծանր յանձնառութեան տակ որ յաջորդող սերունդը (մեր ծնողները) հայկական դաստիարակութիւն ստանայ եւ շարունակէ սկսուած գործը. հոգի դրին այդ աշխատանքին: Այս պատճառներով է որ իմ Պապուկս եւ իր սերնդակիցները այսօր ինծի համար մեծ ներշնչման աղբիւր են:

Իրենց բոլոր ջանքերը ի վերջոյ յաջողեցան եւ յաջորդող սերունդը փաստեց որ իրենք արժանաւոր ժառանգներն էին իրենց ծնողներուն: Երկրորդ սերունդին դաստիարակութեան եւ յամառ աշխատանքին որպէս արդիւնք, իրենց զաւակները շարունակեցին հայլեզուի եւ մշակոյթի պահպանումը: Իրենց դաստիարակութեան արդիւնքով էր որ յաջորդող սերունդին պահանջատիրութիւնը զօրացաւ եւ Հայ Դատի հետապնդման երկարաշունչ արշաւը սկսաւ: Երբ կարիք զգացուեցաւ, յաջորդող սերունդի երիտասարդութիւնը նաեւ ստանձնեց հայ գաղութներու ինքնապաշտպանութեան գործը, ինչպէս Լիբանանի քաղաքացիական պատերազմի ժամանակ եւ Արցախի ազատագրական շարժումի





Պուրճ Զամուտի Զ.Յ. Դաշնակցութեան  
Սարտարապատ ակումբի հիմնարկէի  
արարողութիւն, Մայիս 28, 1960: Կը խօսի  
Անդրանիկ Ուրֆալեանը

ընթացքին: Երկրորդ սերունդն էր որ պատրաստեց մեր Միեւրոնները, Կիզէնները, Պարոյրները, Լիզպոնի տղաքը եւ բազմաթիւ ուրիշներ՝ որոնք վառ պահեցին իրենց նախորդող Զաւուշներու եւ Սերոբներու ժառանգը:

Ահաւասիկ այսօր, երկու սերունդ անցած, մենք ենք ժառանգորդները այդ հրաշագոր երկրորդ սերունդին: Սփիւռքի մէջ մենք ստիպուած ենք դիմադրել ծուլումի լուրջ վտանգը: Պէտք է պայքարինք անոր դէմ եւ կառչած մնանք մեր մայրենի մշակոյթին ու լեզուին որպէսզի խուսափինք այդ վտանգէն: Մեր բարոյական պարտականութիւնն է շարունակել մեր մեծ հայրերուն եւ մեծ մայրերուն սկսած գործը: Իրենք անդուլ աշխատեցան որպէսզի մենք աւելի բախտաւոր կեանքեր ապրինք եւ կարելիութիւններ ունենանք: Մենք պէտք չէ յուսախաբ ընենք անոնց երազը: Պարտականութիւն ունինք անոնց կտակը եւ իրենց թողած ժառանգը հետապնդելու: Կարգը հասած է մեր սերունդին, որ այս դարուս ունի բազմաթիւ կարելիութիւններ: Պէտք է պահենք մեր հայրութիւնը, մեր սուրբ լեզուն ու մշակոյթը: Առանց այս բոլորին՝ օտար երկիրներու մէջ անկարելի է չծուլուիլ:

Պէտք է ճիշդ թափենք որ միշտ իրար հետ հայերէն խօսինք՝ տունը, դպրոցը, ակումբը... Պէտք է քաջալերենք մեր մշակոյթի վերելքը եւ ինչու չէ՝ մասնակից դառնանք այդ աշխատանքին: Պէտք է գիտնանք մեր ազգին պատմութիւնը, կարդանք եւ սորվինք մեր նախահայրերուն մասին, որպէսզի անոնց տառապանքներն ու ցաւերը, յաջողութիւններն ու յաղթութիւնները մեզի մղեն դէպի աշխատանք: Մեր մեծ հայրերն ու մեծ մայրերը շատ աւելի դժուար պայմաններու ենթարկուելով կարողացան մշակել նորահաս սերունդներ՝ որոնք Զայ

Դատի եւ հայ ժողովուրդի պաշտպանման համար կը շարունակեն պայքարիլ մինչեւ օրս: Զայ Դատի պահանջատիրութենէն անդին, Թուրքիոյ դէմ մեր վրէժը լուծելու ամենակարեւոր մէկ ձեւն է մեր մշակոյթի եւ լեզուի պահպանումը: Եղեռնի վերապրողները, իրենց վերքերը դեռ չի դարմանած, աշխատեցան ապագայի սերունդը հայ պահելու. քայլ առ քայլ յաջորդող սերունդները իրենց բաժինը կատարեցին: Զիմա ժամանակն է որ մեր սերունդը, տպաւորուած մեր մեծհայրերով, առնէ ՅԱՅՈՐԴ ԶԱՅԼԸ:

Ալիք Ուրֆալեան



1960 Պուրճ Զամուտի Նոր  
Սիւ Դաղամասի Լուսինեան  
Վարժարանի ճոք դասարան



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