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**TO BE AN ARMENIAN**


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*So many times  
I have been asked:  
What does Armenian mean?*

*.... Being an Armenian  
is having an obsession  
for the world to know  
how hard it is to survive  
with the memories  
of our lost ones  
still fresh and vivid  
in the folds of our minds.  
It is almost  
to be a dreamer*

*waiting  
to touch the dream.  
It is a ritual  
to drop our tears  
and root our sweat  
in foreign soils.  
It is to understand  
deep in our bones  
the unfairness  
of humankind  
who denies us the chance  
to be revived  
in our rights.*

*It is to climb the soul  
to reach the truth  
or to fight the injustice  
encircling the planet  
at large.*

*The Armenian  
is the one who has lost  
somewhere  
in the burning corners  
of the deserts  
those who shared  
the same poem  
the same blood.*

*The one who knows  
the meaning  
of being tortured  
and enslaved  
and how to be chained  
to the roots  
of an end.*

*The special one  
who has inherited  
the glory of a past  
but is nailed  
to the silence  
of history.*

*I know it.  
I am one of them.*

*And I can explain  
with wounds  
still open  
the screams that roar  
inside us.*

*How can memory  
erase a massacre?*



*How can we save  
the innocents  
thrown into hell  
elders  
women  
children  
all of them  
with their throats slashed  
in the middle  
of a song.*

*We exist here and now  
but just in halves  
as we also belong there  
where old voices*

*are still haunting us.*

*We dance and laugh  
in fragments  
as tragedies  
are stored in us.*

*But we believe  
in resurrection.  
We believe  
in new songs  
and new prayers  
in dressing God  
with another robe  
where the stains of blood*

*will never show.*

*We can be born again  
from our ashes.*

*We have the power  
to renew  
inspire  
create  
struggle  
and fight.  
Simply and forever  
we are Armenian.*

*Alicia Ghiragossian*

### About the Poet

*By Azadouhi Kalaidjian*

Alicia Ghiragossian is the author of twenty volumes of poetry which have been translated into and published in Italian, Persian, Greek, French, Arabic, Russian and Portuguese. Her work has gained the recognition and admiration of internationally known writers like French poet Jacques Prevert, Argentinean writer Jorge Luis Borges, Uruguayan poet Juana De Ibanbarou, and American writer William Saroyan. Alicia's poetry was the subject of a Ph. D Thesis in literature at the University of San Paulo, Brazil in 1993. She has taught courses in modern poetry at U.C.L.A. and has given lectures and seminars at universities in different countries. She has participated in world congresses and has served as a juror in international contests of literature. She is covered extensively in the Armenian and Greek Encyclopedia.

Alicia Ghiragossian has brought about a rebirth, a renaissance in poetry through her published poems and her numerous poetry recitals. The acceptance of her work has been massive and unanimous. She is admired and truly loved by the entire Armenian people, whether in Armenia or in its Diaspora, from factory workers to college students, from artists and writers to university professors or Academy members. In 1985 her 35th literary Jubilee was officially celebrated in Los Angeles and in European and Middle Eastern countries. In Yerevan, Capital of Armenia, they have named school classrooms after her, and her bronze bust is placed in the

National Museum of Arts and Literature.

She has won international awards for her poetic achievements, and Yerevan (Armenia) State University has officially presented Alicia Ghiragossian to the Swedish Academy for the Nobel Prize for Literature. The University students indicate in the polls taken during the current year, that for the last three decades Alicia Ghiragossian has been considered a giant in the field of poetry and will be remembered among those poets who have enjoyed a unique place in the history of literature like Garcia Lorca, Ibanbourou, Pushkin, Neruda and Gibran. They claim that Alicia's poetry goes beyond the Armenian ethnic boundaries, as her voice has a universal resonance and makes a rich contribution to world culture.

Maria Paez De Ruiz, a professor of literature at Southwest Texas State University has made the following statement:

"Alicia Ghiragossian's poetry is the ultimate food for the soul. The caliber of her work must be acknowledged and it is imperative that she be awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. Never before have we encountered poetry which is more deserving of this highest honor. With her mission of peace, love and art, the world can only become a better place when we allow the seeds of her poetry to be implanted in the hearts of the people." (for more information on the poet see *Al-Raida* issue # 76).