



The Muslims *of* Darürrahat

By Ismail Gaspirali

Translated by
Çiğdem Pala Mull

Edited by
Sharon Carson

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Preface

There's a visually stunning scene early in Ryan Coogler and Joe Robert Cole's film *Black Panther* (2018) where Nakia, T'Challa, and Okoye arrive at the hidden African nation of Wakanda. They are flying a futuristic Royal Talon Fighter, swooping low over verdant landscapes and mountains, then breaking through a protective hologram to land in The Golden City, Wakanda's beautifully high tech and futuristic capital.

In Ismail Gaspirali's 1890s story *The Muslims of Darürrahat* (the Peaceful Country), the narrator Mullah Abbas Efendi's arrival in utopia is subterranean: he is led by his guides from Alhambra palace in Andalusia through an underground tunnel, from which he will emerge blinking into the sun of the hidden land of Darürrahat, also a verdant land dotted with beautiful architecture and technologically advanced cities.

Both scenes are epiphanous for characters, and also for audiences. As T'Challa says as he gazes over Wakanda, "This never gets old."

Afrofuturist Wakanda may initially seem narrative miles distant from the 19th century imaginary of Andalusian Darürrahat, but there is a striking shared dimension in these two artistic works of utopian imagination: both stories are crafted in a secret world, a refuge that is both "no place" in traditionally utopian literary terms, but also most definitely "some place," within the narratives but also referentially to the world outside the story. Both Wakanda and Darürrahat are defined and crafted as refuges created in response to war, and in both cases, they serve as refuge from imperial and/or colonial intrusions and international conflict. Both worlds are explored

and inhabited by characters who critique “the outside world,” and who deploy irony and humor as a mode of resistance. And both stories are propelled by futuristic aesthetics. And in both narratives, there are characters who traverse between “the hidden word” and “the outside world,” a breakdown of dualism between the worlds that proves critical to the plot.

Placing these two works of art side by side lets us ask some broader comparative questions about utopian imagination: If we presume that utopian imaginaries are sparked by the historical experiences and concerns of the original writers and audiences, we can ask: what historical circumstances seem to generate imagined “hidden worlds” like those of *Darürrahat* and *Wakanda*? And, which historical contexts might be most likely to invite audiences to newly embrace—or return to—works like *The Muslims of Darürrahat* or the *Black Panther* stories? Granted the distinct and particular social and political contexts for these works in their own time and place, are there any shared elements in these works of art that may offer some transnational¹ insights into utopian art and imagination?

For 21st century audiences internationally and in the United States, the Afrofuturistic aesthetics and diasporic political elements of a utopian film like *Black Panther* will likely be more accessible and feel quite contemporary. Understanding better the “origin contexts” of Gaspirali’s *The Muslims of Darürrahat* may require more investigation for some readers today, and will likely send new readers—especially those living with the educational impact of “Cold War” echoes in United States public education—off into more unfamiliar waters to learn about less familiar aspects of world history. But as we hope to show in our volume, even in different keys and historical contexts, the cross-cultural concerns driving Ismail Gaspirali to write this story remain very much in play in our time.

1 We use the term “transnational” in this project to refer to phenomena which either move across national boundaries or are without reference to nations or national boundaries.

Gaspirali's utopian fiction, and his life and work, invite present-day readers to explore not only the complexities of utopian journalism and literary imagination, but also the history of Central Asia, the history of Crimean Tatars and the Tatar diaspora, the complex historical relationships between 18th and 19th century Russian colonial imperialism and diverse Central Asian Islamic cultures, and the 19th century emergence of modernist Muslim reform movements such as Jadidism in Central Asian and across Pan-Turkic Islamic societies. Clearly, the possibilities for comparative literary criticism and transnational cultural studies expands accordingly.

Çiğdem Pala Mull and I look forward to further collaborations and comparative studies of 19th century utopian fiction and art. We are interested in working with (and sparking reader interest in) a wider range of Muslim utopian thinkers, especially in relation to other 19th century and early 20th century thinkers who like Gaspirali often worked in the genre of utopian literary journalism.

We first published excerpts of *The Muslims of Dariürrahat* in the 2017 *Transnational* issue of the *North Dakota Quarterly*, a collaborative special issue co-edited by myself, Çiğdem Pala Mull, and our colleague Gayatri Devi. We are now very pleased at the opportunity to publish Çiğdem's full translation of the story for a wider range of readers.

Sharon Carson

Timeline for İsmail Bey Gaspıralı (1851-1914)

We offer this brief timeline to help our readers get a contextual sense of İsmail Gaspıralı's life and work, and especially to show where his writing of *The Muslims of Darürrahat* (1887) falls within his long life of activism and creative labor. Our sketch here emphasizes his journalism and educational advocacy, and is based on the scholarly work of Edward Lazzerini. The timeline also owes a debt to Crimean Tatar researcher and activist Inci Bowman's much more detailed timeline created for a 2014 Centennial tribute to Gaspıralı. (<https://iccrimea.org/Gaspırali/gasptimeline.html>)

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 1851 | March 8, born in Avci, Crimea to Muslim Crimean Tatar parents. Early childhood spent in Bakhchysarai, Crimea. |
| 1865-1867 | Attends Moscow Military Academy. |
| 1867-1871 | Russian language instructor in the Zincirli Madrassa and in a Tatar mekteb (elementary religious school) in Dereköy (Yalta). |
| 1872 | Travels across Europe to Paris. |
| 1872-1874 | Paris: works as a translator and assistant to writer Ivan Turgenev. |

- 1874 Istanbul: works as a translator, studies “literary Turkish,” and writes journalism for newspapers in Russia.
- 1875 Returns to Crimea.
- 1878-1882 Elected and serves as Mayor of Bakhchysarai, Crimea.
- 1879-1881 Makes numerous attempts to obtain permission from Russian authorities to publish a Turkic language newspaper in Bakhchysarai.
- 1881-1882 Publishes his own newsletter in Crimean Tatar, and works on other writings aimed at both Muslim and non-Muslim Russian readers.
- 1882 Marries Zühre Akçora (from Kazan).
- 1882 Receives permission from Russian officials to begin publishing *Tercüman/Perevodchik* (in Turkic and Russian). First issue published on April 12, 1883. Eventually titled *Tercüman*, the newspaper continues in various forms and publication schedules until 1918.
- Early 1880s Advocate and activist for modernist reforms in Islam and Islamic culture. Emerges as a key innovator of the “new method” (Usul-ü Cedid) for education in mektebs and madrassas.
- 1884 Opens new mekteb using Ceditist (Jadidist) principles in Bakhchysarai and also opens an adult evening school using the new methods.

- Begins lifelong effort to open Usul-ü Cedit schools across Central Asia and the wider Muslim world.
- Circa 1890s** Publishes his utopian story *The Muslims of Darürrahat* in installments in *Tercüman*.
- 1890s** Continues to publish *Tercüman* and numerous other articles and pamphlets, and advocates across Russia and Central Asia (including Tashkent) for progressive educational and cultural reforms within a framework of “Muslim Enlightenment.”
- 1905** Key organizer of “First Congress of the Union of Russian Muslims,” a meeting of progressive Russian Muslims also known as “The Congress on the Water.”
- 1906** “Second Muslim Congress” (St. Petersburg)
“Third Muslim Congress” (Nizhny-Novgorod)
- 1906** As press laws in Russia gradually liberalize, 40+ Muslim newspapers emerge.
- 1906** Publishes *Alem-i Sibyan* (*The World of Children*) for children and teachers. (runs until 1915)
- 1906** Publishes *Kha! Kha! Kha! (Ha! Ha! Ha!)* a publication of satire and humor.
- 1906** Publishes one issue of *Millet* a newspaper focusing on issues facing Russian Muslim communities (further publication not allowed by Russian authorities).

- 1906 Publishes his full utopian novel *Dâru-l Rahat Müslimanları* (*Muslims of Peaceful Abode*).
- 1906-1910 Groundbreaking publication of *Alem-i Nisvan* (*The World of Women*), edited by Gaspirali's daughter Şefiqa Gaspirali.
- 1907-1914 Increased activities outside of Russia and Central Asia, with focus on Pan-Turkic and Pan-Islamic unity, progressive journalism, and educational reforms. Regular travel to Istanbul.
- 1907-1914 Numerous attempts to organize a Muslim Congress in Cairo.
- 1908 Launches short-lived Arabic newspaper called *Al-Nahdah* (*The Renaissance*) in Cairo.
- 1912 Travels to India.
- 1914 September 11, dies after long illness, in Bakhchysarai.

Editor's Introduction

As longtime Gaspirali scholar Ed Lazzerini explains in his reflective essay in our volume, access to the archives and literary work of Jadid educator, journalist, and cultural reformer Ismail Gaspirali (*Gasprinsky* in Russian) has long been a challenge for western-based scholars, especially in the wake of 20th and 21st century international politics, residual “Cold War” dynamics impacting international research, and related intellectual habits of scholarly attention (and inattention) which often still condition transnational research.

Because of this, we are especially pleased to offer Gaspirali's story *The Muslims of Darürrahat* as an opportunity for readers to explore a work of 19th century utopian literary imagination not previously accessible in an English translation. We especially hope that Çiğdem Pala Mull's translation of *The Muslims of Darürrahat* opens a wider transnational stage for English readers who are exploring utopian imagination as a *mode of thinking* and as a mode of social art, social criticism, and cultural engagement. In particular, we offer this translation of *The Muslims of Darürrahat* as an exemplary literary work preoccupied with utopian “education of desire.” More on this in our essays, but we hope this project will spark further interest in the work of artists, scholars, philosophers, and literary critics working in the many trajectories of utopian studies.

The Muslims of Dariürrahat was originally written for Gaspirali's Turkic¹ and Russian language newspaper *Ter-cüman*, in a time and place where the historical stresses which sparked Gaspirali's utopian imagination are less familiar to many English language readers, especially in the United States. But his historical contexts have interesting parallels with social history in the U.S. during the late 19th and early 20th century, and, if we use comparative care, in our time as well.

Gaspirali was an international activist and a writer responding with great creativity to transnational intellectual developments, while at the same time facing very difficult historical stresses in Central Asia. Specifically for Gaspirali, his life and work unfolded as he advocated for cultural self-definition and political/social autonomy for Muslim communities internationally, while simultaneously dealing with multiple pressures on Muslim autonomy from Russian imperialism and colonialism in Crimea and Central Asia.

In addition, his Tatar and Crimean cultural identity remained centrally important to him in relation to his homeland, his Muslim identity, his own diasporic experience, and his work to advance pan-Turkic cultural reform. He had strong commitments to Pan-Turkic language development and Pan-Islamic identity and religious reform, for which he passionately argued while facing pressures *against* social and theological "modernism" from within strongly traditionalist Islamic communities. As a 19th and 20th century Muslim reformer educated in both madrassahs and universities, in both "east" and "west," and with attachments to Enlightenment philosophical principles, he also grappled within his own communities with conflicts

1 Note on usage: We use the term "Turkic" as a broad category of language and culture, found across time and in very wide geographical distribution, including Central, North, South and East Asia, Eastern Europe, and the Mediterranean. Turkic includes Gaspirali's native Crimean Tatar, other forms of Tatar, and varied forms of Turkish language used in the Ottoman and Russian Empires of Gaspirali's lifetime.

over the cultural authority of politics and religion. And he was constantly arguing the critical need for ongoing educational advancement (for everyone) and the critical role of journalism in progressive politics.

These issues facing Gaspirali are of course also transnationally vibrant in our day, registering in different keys across widely diverse contemporary communities and spaces.

In *The Muslims of Darürrahat*, Ismail Gaspirali uses utopian art as a figurative means to spark within readers a desire to dream—and act—for a better actual future. The story cultivates desire forward, toward educational and social reform, toward social spaces which allow the best of human capacities and creative energies to flourish.

Gaspirali projected these desires into the fictional utopian world of Darürrahat, writing with a moving sense of urgency. Working as a literary journalist, Gaspirali added his serialized fiction to a steady stream of newspaper articles documenting his real-world concerns, a journalistic fusion of genres clearly created in hopes of sparking concrete social action. Given his time and day, there are some fascinating moments of cautious optimism in *The Muslims of Darürrahat*, along with cautionary tensions in the story, and an undercurrent worry about utopian impulses becoming authoritarian.

While *The Muslims of Darürrahat* has some familiar features of literary “blueprint” utopias, the story is full of critical tension and a sense that the future remains unknown. In this sense, *The Muslims of Darürrahat* exemplifies Ruth Levitas’s argument that utopian art is most usefully provocative not when offering a blueprint for the unrealizable perfect world, but rather creating an imaginary scenario as a *mode of critique* aimed squarely at the author’s present world. Such artistic cultivation of cultural *desire* takes seriously the hope that a better collective future is in fact possible, and points readers—via narrative art—to the principles by which an actual better future might unfold.

There are many directions for further work with Gaspirali's utopian imagination and we welcome further translation of his journalism and literary efforts, a project well along the way thanks to the work of Edward Lazzerini, other translators, and their digital humanities collaborators.

As one example of possible further work, in creating this volume we have noticed some intriguing comparative possibilities for further work with American utopian literature of the same era. Our own interests initially tracked toward comparative work with Edward Bellamy and his 1888 novel *Looking Backward* (and its international reception), but we also plan further work with Gaspirali in comparative frames with other novels like *Imperium in Imperio*, Sutton E. Griggs's 1899 novel of Black utopian social critique. And even granted *The Muslims of Dariürrahat*'s figurative critique of the potentially authoritarian dimensions in utopian hope, the story is not an anti-utopian work, and can be read in comparison not only to other Black American utopian works by writers like W.E.B. Du Bois and later, Octavia Butler (thanks to Alex Zamalin for his very helpful work in *Black Utopia*), but also other writers worldwide whose historical experience disallows any delusional "perfect world" glow in utopian imagination.

And while the story is not exactly futuristic, it is fantastical enough in its narrative elements to invite comparative work with all kinds of other futurisms, literary and otherwise.

Another open arena for further interpretive work with strong cross-cultural resonance today: Gaspirali was a lifelong advocate for international women's rights. He and his daughter Şefiqa Gaspıralı created *Alem-i Nisvan*, the first Crimean Tatar newspaper focused on women in the Central Asian Islamic world. Şefiqa Gaspıralı was a journalist, educator, and activist who lived for many decades in Turkey and whose own legacy invites further exploration by scholars.

The role of women and the tropes of gender are fascinating within the text of *The Muslims of Dariürrahat* as well, and Çiğdem Pala Mull addresses this in her translator's essay. Our

narrator's guide, Feride Banu, is a doctor in Darürrahat and she is centered in the story as the key philosopher and teacher, charged with delivering an extensive and defining account of the founding of Darürrahat. There's also an early plotline in the story where we encounter a familiar utopian literary device: "a traveler who is led to the mystical utopian world." This time, our intrepid narrator is led to utopia by a group of "maidens." But this gendered device is complicated by our narrator Molla Abbas' ironic voice and his own tendency toward the 19th century male swoon. All kinds of comparative directions in literary studies arise here, especially in relation to other 19th century feminist utopian works (see Johns in the bibliography).

The Muslims of Dariürrahat will reward repeat readings: the extended and detailed opening discourse on Andalusian history can be initially challenging for readers unfamiliar with world history through Islamic cultural lenses. But the historical account in this section is also highly literary: it illuminates the perspective of the narrator and frames the whole story, and is thus rhetorically fascinating. As a Central Asian Muslim writer, Gaspirali has his narrator Mullah Abbas (and later in the story, Feride) recite the history of Andalusia (Al-Andalus) in southern Spain through historically descriptive and also highly nostalgic lenses. For both characters, their account constitutes a lament for a lost Islamic Golden Age. In the story itself these invocations of historical memory serve both to recover a valued past and also to project readers toward a utopian and explicitly "modernist" *hope* for the future. That our narrator and his guides drop into a tunnel through the floor of Granada's Alhambra palace is an early sign that the story will be working back and forth across time and space, pulling a recovered era from the Islamic past into Gaspirali's hope for a Pan-Islamic future. Once our characters are moving around in Darürrahat, the fictional dynamics intensify and we are on a landscape where Gaspirali invites his readers into a future world of utopian beauty, cultural accomplishment, and lingering worry.

Our essays in this volume hope to open some of these interpretive frames in more detail for our readers. Çiğdem Pala Mull's translator's essay "Ismail Gaspirali and *The Muslims of Dariürrahat*" offers important literary and social context for both Gaspirali's life and work, and for the story itself. *The Muslims of Dariürrahat* translation includes additional contextual notes. My interpretive essay "Gaspirali's Restless 'Education of Desire,'" offers some possibilities for reading the story as an intriguing iteration of 19th century utopian literature. Then in the third essay, "Why and How I Found Ismail Bey Gaspirali," Edward Lazzerini, a lifelong scholar of Russian and Central Asian studies, has crafted a personal reflection upon his long career devoted to researching Ismail Gaspirali's life and work. We've added a bibliography for those interested in further reading.

We hope that these three essays and the translation itself will contribute to interpretive projects already well under way by many others: transnational readings of utopian art; literary critique of genres which weave together theology, social critique, and historical imagination; constructions (and disruptions) of "east-west" binaries in historiography, arts and media; further work critiquing the impact of colonialism, anti-colonialism and postcolonialism on cultural history and the literary arts; and transnational dimensions of 19th century reform movements in literary journalism, politics, religion and education. We did not assume unanimity of thought on any of these issues among ourselves, and trust that readers of this volume will bring a range of perspectives, critiques, and concerns to these topics.

Last but not least, and cognizant of the many linguistic, political and philosophical complexities embedded in translation work, by translating *The Muslims of Dariürrahat* to English and making this text available to a wider range of readers, we offer this project as a contribution to transnational and comparative utopian studies. For more work primarily published

in English related to these many topics, we recommend *Utopian Studies*, the journal for the Society for Utopian Studies, published by Penn State University Press.

Sharon Carson

Ismail Gaspiralı and The Muslims of Darürrahat

Çiğdem Pala Mull

A modernist movement of reform of Islamic life started in the third quarter of the nineteenth century led by intellectuals who were familiar with Western values and lifestyle and wanted to change some of the old practices that they thought were limiting life and progress in the Islamic countries. Tatar intellectual Gaspiralı (1851-1914) was one the leading activists in Russia. His influence as a writer, educator, journalist, politician, and reformist was not limited to the Muslim community in Russia. He had a deep impact on Turkic and Turkish intellectual life through his progressive ideas on language, education, and social life. As a public intellectual who devoted his life to the education of his people, he left a great legacy of resistance, perseverance, and revolutionary spirit.

After receiving his education in both traditional Muslim schools and Russian schools, Gaspiralı traveled through Europe making acquaintances with Western writers. Through these experiences, he gained insight into Western cultures and ideas. When he came back to Crimea, he became a leader in Pan-Turkic enlightenment. He was highly influential in the formation of the national and cultural identity of the Crimean people with the proposed dictum “unity in language, thought, and deed.” His desire was not only to have a common language that all Turkic peoples could use and understand but also to create a common Pan-Turkish identity and culture. He advocated the use of a common and simplified Turkish language, free

from Arabic, Persian, and Latin influences. This could only be accomplished with a common education. As a strong supporter of secularism, he started a school with co-ed education using what he termed as Usul-ü Cedid (New Method). This method started as the new way to teach the alphabet phonetically in a shorter time but later it became the name of the revolutionary movement towards enlightenment and advancement of the Muslim people. He believed that the backwardness and poverty of the Muslim community he observed was predominantly the result of the lack of education. He managed to establish many schools following the New Method with the support of the Muslim public even though he didn't receive any help from the Russian authorities.

İsmail Gaspıralı dedicated his life to the modernization of the Muslim society in Crimea and all over the world. He was one of the leading figures of Panturkism which was a political movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries with its goal to unite all Turkic-language-speaking people. Social revolutions in Russia at the time enabled economic and social progress for the Russian communities but Muslims living in Russia did not keep up with this progress. He aimed to start with the Turkic and Muslim communities in Russia and spread the idea of progress and unity throughout the Muslim world.

To enlighten his community and Muslim people around the world, Gaspıralı started *Tercüman* (The Interpreter) newspaper, which was the first newspaper for the Crimean Tatars, printing articles with political, social, and cultural content. The topics of the articles ranged from legal advice for land-owning, banking and credit, health issues and vaccination, and environmental problems to agricultural technology. On one hand, as an intellectual who devoted his life to the modernization of the Muslim world, he had to deal with the traditionalist views of the Muslim leaders questioning and criticizing his methods. On the other hand, he had to continue educating his people under the watchful eyes of the Russian authorities demanding every article be printed in two languages: Crimean Tatar and

Russian. Despite the pressures he felt from both the Russian authorities and the traditionalist Muslims, he continued to go after his desire to help his community carefully and patiently, and *Tercüman* newspaper stayed in print for 35 years.

Aside from informative articles, his travel writing and some short narratives using the nickname of Mullah Abbas were also published in *Tercüman* newspaper in installments. Considered one of the earliest Turkish utopias, *The Muslims of Darürrahāt* was one of these narratives that was published in installments in the 1890s. Later in 1906, Gaspıralı published it in a book form based on the serialized version.

Harboring the hope of a better life, utopias generally reflect the anxieties of the times that they were written in. In “Utopias, Past and Present: Why Thomas More Remains Astonishingly Radical,” Terry Eagleton argues: “Alternative universes are really devices for embarrassing the present, as imaginary cultures are used to estrange and unsettle our own” (*The Guardian*, Fri. 16 Oct. 2015). By doing this, utopias call for a social and political transformation. The main character Mullah Abbas constantly feels embarrassed for the state of affairs in his country and for his lack of knowledge. Through his presentation of the fictional land of Darürrahāt, Gaspıralı wanted to present his social criticism related to the backwardness of Islamic societies and affect a social transformation.

As one of the earliest examples of Turkic utopias, *The Muslims of Darürrahāt* challenges the kind of thinking that the East did not create utopias and lacked a tradition of social criticism. Krishan Kumar, in *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times*, claimed that “so far as I have been able to establish, nothing like the western utopia and utopian traditions exist in any non-western or non-Christian culture” (1987, 424n4). It has been argued that Eastern cultures do not have a utopian imagination because their focus is not on changing the world but on accepting the present reality and working for the world hereafter. Murat Belge, in “Turkish Style Utopias,” comments on the limitations of Turkish utopias by saying, “I think

utopias depend more on imagining ‘revolutionary’ changes in human beings’ relationships to other human beings rather than imagining changes in their relationships to things. We don’t see much of this in our utopias. They imagine a process that can be summarized as ‘progress while keeping the class distinctions’ and this is not a utopia.”¹ The arguments for or against the universal and timeless appeal of utopian imagination propose their own ways of defining the concept but ultimately every culture produces their versions of the ideal world.

According to Jacqueline Dutton, in “Utopia, Limited: Transnational Utopianism and Intercultural Imaginaries of the Ideal,” the concept of utopia has always been a transnational concept from the beginning even though it came out before the idea of nations. Focusing on the limitations of the concept of transnational utopia for non-western literatures, she proposes the concept of “intercultural imaginaries of the ideal”:

Utopia is therefore limited by its Eurocentric foundations, as well as the definitions that subsequently influence identification of utopian texts, binding them to particular aesthetics, value systems, and practices. But if we think about utopia as “intercultural imaginaries of the ideal” we can allow more recognition of non-European influences and traditions. (109)

Dutton’s study allows more room to discuss different variations of the genre. When Thomas More gave the name to this genre, he combined both the beauty and the impossibility of the imaginary ideal world. The word utopia signifies an imaginary ideal place that is also found nowhere. The idea of creating fictional ideal worlds found its followers all around the world regardless of the cultural or national boundaries.

Gaspıralı’s ideal is also one that transcends boundaries with its proposal of a new society that has a combination of European and Islamic civilizations. Offering his ideas on education, law, urbanization, the status of women in society, science, and

1 The translation is mine.

technology, he proposes a new society that is more advanced than its Eastern or European counterparts. His desire was not to copy European civilization but to create a better society using the values of both the East and the West. In his book called *Turkish Utopias*, Sadık Usta mentions that İsmail Gaspıralı read and published Edward Bellamy's socialist utopian novel *Looking Backward* in installments in his newspaper *Tercüman* (95). Written at about the same time, Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* and Gaspıralı's *The Muslims of Darürrahat* imagined their ideal worlds with similar concerns and desires even though their imagined worlds were also limited by the ideas and the assumptions of the actual worlds they were living in. As opposed to using a forward-looking perspective and projecting toward the future in the creation of an ideal society, in *The Muslims of Darürrahat*, Gaspıralı chooses to look back nostalgically to the Golden Age of Muslim civilization in Andalusia: "The Islamic government in Andalusia, in its time, was one of the foremost in the world with its science, ability, and governing style..." His utopia contains nostalgic elements and reflects the ideals of the past toward the future. In *Darürrahat*, history, science, and reason work together to accomplish the ideal society that has both tradition and progress.

At certain times in the narrative, the tension between tradition and progress creates an uneasy atmosphere for both the reader and the character of Mullah Abbas. Even though he admires all of the improvements he sees in education, technology, sciences, law, and social life in *Darürrahat*, which means "peaceful country," he has moments of doubt and discomfort. Rahime Çokay Nebioğlu in "Utopia, Religion, and Transcendence" argues that Gaspıralı's work "is another utopian work distinguished by its idealization of Islamic law, prioritization of the East over the West, and confinement of the utopian space" (613). The confinement of the utopian space is evident towards the end of the book when Mullah Abbas wants to leave *Darürrahat* and go back to his previous life. His wish is denied and then granted after careful deliberation by the Amir. What

makes Mullah Abbas want to go back to his home after discovering such a wonderful place is perhaps a desire to enlighten his people much like the escaped prisoner of Plato going back to the allegorical cave.

Nebioglu's criticism of Gaspıralı's utopia with "its idealization of Islamic law, prioritization of the East over the West" can find some support within the text but I believe it is diminishing the fact that Gaspıralı was critical of the decline in values in both the East and the West. At the same time, he was admiring and supporting many aspects of both the East and the West. As a devoted Muslim man, he was concerned about the backwardness of his people and the poor state of education in Islamic countries. Instead of choosing to prioritize the West over the East, he chose to go back to a nostalgic Islamic past together with some progressive Western ideas to find a model for his imagined land.

Gaspıralı's utopian Darürrahat is a land that had been established by a group of Muslims who ran away from the war when they lost Andalusia in Spain. They form a secret community and live in an unreachable place among the mountains. They are not affected by the decline that the Muslim communities go through and are able to protect and improve their civilization. The emphasis on their past, the story of the foundation of Darürrahat, and their connection to the history of Andalusia are all very significant for this narrative. The utopian plot depends on the memory of Mullah Abbas's visit to Andalusia and is focused on the memory of a golden age of Islam. Darürrahat is built on remembering and reconstructing the high moments of Islam while progressing toward the future. Long narrative accounts of Darürrahat's history are told eloquently by the members of this land in order not to forget the past and to keep the history alive.

Despite the emphasis on the past and preserving history, many improvements in Darürrahat are geared towards the future. Gaspıralı imagined advanced science and engineering, innovative architecture, a highly organized society, and

higher education opportunities for both sexes in his utopian creation. These improvements and advancements are presented in a way to emphasize the differences between the present state of Islamic societies in Gaspıralı's day and the way of life in Darürrahat. Gaspıralı believed that Islam was corrupted by the misunderstanding and greed of people. What he longed for was to go back to a better understanding of Islam before the corruption of men. Following the teachings of the Qur'an, he wanted Muslims everywhere to go after knowledge wherever they may find it.

Gaspıralı's understanding of social progress required a total and complete awakening of people. He emphasized the necessity of raising the educational level of women together with men. In Russia during the time of the Tzar, under a long-lasting invasion, women had no fundamental rights and liberties. Especially among the Turkic minorities, there were many abused, persecuted, and undereducated women. Gaspıralı and his daughter, Şefika Gaspıralı worked together for the emancipation of Turkic women and the improvement of women's rights. Şefika Gaspıralı was a pioneer of the women's movement in Russia at the beginning of the 20th century.² She was the editor of the first women's journal *Alem-i Nisvan* (World of Women). Both the father and the daughter believed that one of the major reasons why the Muslim communities were regarded as backward was the way women were excluded from social life.

The freedom and equality of women have always been regarded as the center of political, social, and cultural progress. İsmail Gaspıralı believed that Islam and the Qur'an supported the idea of justice but practices of Islam that he observed disregarded the intent of the Islamic law and demonstrated unjust attitudes, especially towards women in society. Gaspıralı advocated the legitimate rights of women and tried to integrate

2 See Şengül Hablemitoğlu, *Şefika Gaspıralı ve Rusya'da Türk Kadın Hareketi 1893-1920*. (*Şefika Gaspıralı and Turkish Women's Movement in Russia 1893-1920*) Ankara, Toplumsal Dönüşüm Yayınları: 2004.

them fully into education, social life, and the economy. His utopia reflected his desire to elevate the social status of women and start the cultural transformation. In his narrative, Gaspıralı challenges the ideas of his time by presenting women as powerful agents rather than victims.

Shouleh Vatanabadi in “Translating the Transnational: Teaching the ‘Other’ in Translation” claims that the cultural market of the Global North expects “narratives of women as victims in the Middle East outside any complexity, voice, agency, time, and space” (799). *Muslims of Darürrahat* is not a narrative of women as victims without any voice, any complexity, or any depth. In other narratives, Gaspıralı’s traveling hero Mullah Abbas encounters Western women who act as mentors as well as being love interests to him. Mullah Abbas is a 22-year-old student who leaves his hometown Tashkent after the death of his parents. He is a curious person in search of knowledge and experience. In Odessa, during a theatrical performance, he meets a French lady named Josephine. He marries her and goes to Paris however their relationship does not last because of cultural differences. Next, he falls in love with Margarite while teaching her the Russian language. Eventually, he leaves her too, and ends up in Darürrahat. While he teaches what he knows to these female characters, he is also learning from them and growing as a person. Feride Banu in Darürrahat is a character who acts as a mentor and a guide towards Mullah Abbas. She is a doctor and an ideal Muslim woman enjoying equal rights with the men in her land. She explains to Mullah Abbas that Muslims also have high-level civilization and advanced sciences just like the Christians.

The place of women in society functions as a sign of modernization because Gaspıralı believes that the biggest reason for the lack of progress in Islamic countries is the limited freedom that is allowed for women. Gaspıralı advocated for the legitimate rights of women and worked towards full integration of women in education, social life, and the economy. He believed that transformation would happen when women became equal

partners to men in society. That's why in his utopian world, he presents women as active members of their community. The changes in their social status are the results of their participation in marriage as well as laws against forced and arranged marriages, polygamy, and the practice of one-sided divorce.

Gaspıralı expressed his ideas related to the lower status of women in Islamic societies in his other writings. *The Land of Women* (1890) is a short dystopic narrative in which Gaspıralı presented his critique of social injustices specifically about gender roles. Although the didactic purpose overpowers the fictional content at times, the ironic, humorous voice of Gaspıralı is heard through his main character Mullah Abbas. In *The Land of Women*, by presenting a world that is turned upside down in terms of gender roles, Gaspıralı discusses the socially constructed roles and the arbitrary discrimination of women. In the narrative, with Margarite's encouragement, Mullah Abbas, together with three Frenchmen, goes to help Muhammed Ahmed who is the founder of the cult of Mehdi and the leader of Sudanese Arabs who are fighting against the British. They lose their way in the desert and become prisoners of the Land of Women where women rule and men are treated as property. Although in parts of the text, the language used can be considered discriminatory by today's standards, the message presented in the text is revolutionary for its time. Both in *Land of Women* and *Muslims of Darürrahat*, Gaspıralı offers a satirical view on the corruption of Islam. He believes that Islam was forward thinking once but now Islamic principles need to be updated according to changing times.

İsmail Gaspıralı's transnational identity, education, and view of cultures were inspired by many diverse influences in his lifetime and his ideas continue to reach and influence a variety of audiences. As an Eastern representation of the ideal in literature in a form that crosses national boundaries, I hope that this translation of *The Muslims of Darürrahat* will continue to create interaction among many readers.

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Muslims of Darürrahat

Muslims of the Peaceful Country¹ Peaceful and Strange Land of Islam (Work of Abbas Fransovi)

This story is the epilogue to Mullah Abbas Effendi's (from Tashkent) travel narrative called "Letters from Europe" which was published in "Tercüman" newspaper. Leaving the travel to Europe and the commentary on Europe out, here we are presenting the epilogue of this work to our customers in the lands of the Ottomans.

Since it is evident that brilliant ideas and a polite form of writing are not to be expected from a coarse Turk, there is no need to request forgiveness of the faults to be found in the diction of the story.²

Abbas Effendi is a student who received his education in Tashkent Madrasahs and went to Europe in order to visit "Gül Baba's Tomb" in Tekriya and "Forty Saints" in France. After staying in France for a couple of years he continues his visit to Andalusia.

-The publisher

1 This text has been serialized in 1890s in Tercüman newspaper by İsmail Gaspıralı. Gaspıralı published a book titled *Muslims of Darürrahat* later in 1906 based on this text. The text translated here is the 1890 version. Hüseyin Gültekin translated the text from Ottoman to Turkish and it is published in Sadık Usta's book titled *Türk Ütopyaları: Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Ütopya ve Devrim*. (Turkish Utopias: Utopia and Revolution from the Tanzimat Era to the Republic). (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2014).

2 The ironic voice here signals Gaspıralı's subtle use of irony and satire throughout the piece.

In the year of 1880, forty-three hours after leaving Paris, I arrived at the Spanish border. At the last stop, the customs officials checked my belongings, as is the custom and the rule. One of them took a careful look at me and said:

—Are you a Moorish Arab?

—No sir, I am the son of a Tartar from Tashkent.

—I see, from the land of Turkistan, where are you going?

—To Spain, sir.

—Are you a merchant?

—No sir, a humble visitor.

—What are you visiting in our country?

—Praise Allah sir, your country is considered a holy land for us. We call it the Land of Andalusia; this country which cultivated the most pleasant Islamic civilization is very famous and worthy of a visit.

—Yes sir, there are many Islamic works to see. Welcome. On the trains it is not possible to stop very often. If you have time, I would like to have you as my guest. We don't get many Tartars here from Turkistan. You are a unique guest.

I enjoyed these kind words from the Spaniard and realized that they, like the French, are well educated. Besides, these two people are brothers. They are the same kind of people; their languages are similar, and they share the same beliefs. However, these French and Spanish people once had great wars between themselves and cut the throats of each other, similar to the Karabag people killing the Badkubelis and the Bukharans killing the Kokands³. They are also likely to continue cutting each other's throats! Since I knew French, I was able to communicate with the Spanish and after reading the travel writings I quickly gathered some information on the country. Anyone

3 Gaspirali points out the conflicts between the khans of Karadag-Baku in Caucasus and Bukhara-Kokand (Fergana) in Turkistan.

with any knowledge of the French language can communicate in every country in Europe. Many people, even the servants of big hostels, speak French.

The city that I stayed in was the capital city, Madrid, and I went on my visits from this point. Spain is a country of sixteen million people, but it cannot be compared to France in this respect. This must be because of its southern location. However, the regulations of the government and the customs show that it is a European country. They are a very open and happy people; they are very enthusiastic about dancing and musical instruments, but still they are more religious than the French. They show immense respect towards their religion and their sanctuaries.

As it stands, Spain is one of the secondary governments. Comparatively speaking, the people cannot be considered wealthy. In the past, the American continent and some large islands belonged to Spain and at that time shiploads of gold were coming into the country. American savages⁴ would give a handful of gold and silver in return for a small rifle made out of glass. Yet those times have passed and America and the islands formed their separate states. All the gold and silver were spent and gone. Lack of proper skills and unemployment brought neediness and desperation. Spain is a great example and a lesson for everyone: wealth comes from work and skills, not from easy gold. A country full of gold was finished but on the other hand the English land without any gold became the fortune of the world thanks to their people's abilities and hard work! Spaniards ended up destitute like the prodigal people. The busybody British on the other hand dominated everybody and gathered the whole world's property.

Spain is a peninsula on the southern part of the European continent. It is surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean to the west and the Mediterranean Sea to the south. The water and

4 The word "savages" here is used as the direct translation of the words "vahşiler ve yabaniler" in the original text.

air there are truly wonderful. They have plenty of grapevines, figs, pomegranates, lemon, and orange orchards. Although some of the cities lack water and are desert-like, the majority of the country is quite fertile and fruitful. In between the African Islamic countries, Morocco and Spain, stands the Strait of Gibraltar. Islamic warriors crossed this strait to conquer Andalusia.⁵

In the year 84 according to Muslim calendar [the year 668 in the Gregorian calendar], during the time of Caliph Velid bin Abdulmelik, the north side of the African continent up to the Atlantic Ocean was conquered and the people living there made the acquaintance of honorable Islam. Musa ibn Nusayr among the Arab Commanders crossed the strait and spread the religion of Islam even into Andalusia. At that time, the Christian governments were against each other because of treachery and deceit, there were many among them who wanted Muslims to come and conquer their land. That is why Musa ibn Nusayr asked for the Caliph's permission to make an expedition to the Andalusian continent. He wrote that Andalusia was like Damascus in grace, like Yemen in climate and water, and like India in terms of its minerals.

After taking Spain, Commander Musa ibn Nusayr wanted to conquer the French and German lands. And after taking the whole of Europe under siege, he came to Istanbul. That is why, gathering the necessary equipment in the first half of the year 93 [711], Barbary Governor Musa ibn Nusayr appointed Tarik ibn Ziyad as commander to lead the Andalusian conquest. In a short while, a handful of Islam's warriors conquered the whole land and many fortresses, destroying the Christian governments. However, some governments in the open country and on the mountains accepted paying taxes in return for

5 The narrator's retrospective account of Andalusian history here presents a mix of matter-of-fact historical detail with the narrator's interpretive and rhetorical version of history, a mix which sets the utopian stage for the narrative turn to a fictional country of Darürrahat.

their freedom. Apart from the perseverance and bravery of Islam, the justice and fairness they demonstrated in the lands that they conquered made the Christians submit to Islamic rule and obey quite easily. For instance, the conquest of Sevilla was made possible after the Christians' comfort and peace in the conquered city of Toledo had been observed.⁶

As soon as he received the news of Tarik ibn Ziyad's conquests and works, Barbary Governor Musa ibn Nusayr rounded up a legion of soldiers and conquered many other places in Andalusia, yet in reality Tarik was the true conqueror. Since Tarik became well known for his knowledge and talent for fighting and his fairness in administration, Musa became resentful and jealous. He wrote various accusations about Tarik in a letter to the Caliph and they were both invited to Damascus for further investigation. Musa defended himself deceitfully and Tarik ibn Ziyad was forced to leave his position. This well-known conqueror died in 97 [716] in desolate conditions in Andalusia.

In the year 113 [731-732], Muslims crossed the Pyrenes and attacked France. Conquering Toulouse and Bordeaux, they came all the way to the city of Tours. However, because they were too far away from Andalusia and couldn't receive the necessary help, the soldiers became weak. Also, French soldiers under the Commanders Charles Martel and Kuledos attacked the Muslims. In the battle around the city of Poitiers, Muslims lost and had to retreat to Andalusia. I came to France knowing that the Forty Saints pilgrimage was close to this city of Poitiers yet I couldn't find the said area since time had passed and no signs of the Forty Saints had survived.

The continent of Andalusia was subject to the Damascus Caliphs and was run by the appointed governors. But at the time the Damascus Caliphate collapsed and the Caliphate was

6 The narrator's account here frames the Golden Age of Islamic rule in Al-Andalus with an idealized nostalgia which is common in utopian fiction which invokes a "lost past." Our bibliography offers a number of nuanced scholarly accounts of the fascinating complexity of Andalusia's multicultural history.

passed down from the Omayyad dynasty to the Abbasids. Abdurrahman, from the Omayyad dynasty ran away to Andalusia in the year 140 [683-84] and was received respectfully as a Caliph by the people of Andalusia. The Islamic government in Andalusia started with this Abdurrahman Caliph and continued until 895 [1489-90].

The Islamic government in Andalusia, in its time, was one of the foremost in the world with respect to its science, ability, and governing style. Furthermore, it was superior to all governments because of the strength of the army, the brilliance of its knowledge, its general culture, and advanced economy. The civility and good harmony of the people in the Andalusian Islamic country became a model and a lesson for European people. The majority of the wisdom and science of European scholars was received in Andalusian madrasahs. Just as the disunity and disorder among the Christians caused the conquest of Andalusia and the success of the Muslims, disorder among the people of Islam and the unity and perseverance in Christian minds caused the collapse of the Andalusian state. Ferdinand took Andalusia from the Muslims and the last Amir was Mevla Ebu Abdullahu's-Sagir. After months under siege, Ebu Abdullah surrendered the fortress at Granada to Ferdinand and retreated to Maghreb. Spanish soldiers entered the city as Ferdinand and his wife Isabel sat on their thrones in Alhambra Palace. This was the end of the Andalusian State.

When the continent of Andalusia fell into the hands of the Muslims, it was a fertile land with a pleasant climate, but because of the lack of civilization and lack of talent among its people, it was broken down and empty. Yet with the effort, perseverance, and good management of the sons of Arabs, the whole country was full of fruits and people in no time. As a result of the intelligence and civilization, roads and bridges were built everywhere. Fountains on the roads, wells in the desert areas, thousands of mills near waters, factories, villages, towns, and cities were also built. Deserts turned into orchards and gardens; wilderness turned into farms. They brought

water to places where it was deemed impossible before; they gave new life to the arid soil. As a result of their efforts, perseverance, and skills, the people of Islam became fruitful and developed day by day and turned Andalusia into a paradise. As seen in Arab history, alongside Vadi-i Kebir (Grand Valley), twelve thousand villages were built. During the time of Amir Yusuf, every Friday khutbahs (sermons) were given in his honor in three hundred thousand minbars (pulpits)! There were eighty large towns and three hundred cities. In the sultanate city of Córdoba, there were two hundred thousand houses, six hundred mosques, five hundred hospitals, eight hundred madrasahs, and nine hundred baths! The cities of Granada, Toledo, and Seville were also at the level of Córdoba. The Islamic civilization that was the result of great effort and talent should be evaluated according to these. This should demonstrate the Andalusian Muslims' enlightened and happy lives. Thanks to the intelligent and fair rule of the Andalusian Caliphate, they were more advanced than all of the European and Asian countries. As explained in the European histories, the treasures of the Caliph were more than the total of European governments' treasures. The wealth of the government comes from the wealth of its people. The wealth of the people comes from good management, skills, industry, and effort. The education and dissemination of science and wisdom are the reason and the result of this wealth. There had never been as many wise men in another country as we saw in Andalusia. There is a list of two hundred and three scholars who became famous with their scientific works. Some of them wrote one hundred books; the total number of works by them exceeds one thousand. Unfortunately, during the collapse of the Andalusian State, these books fell in the hands of Spanish Christians. At that time, they were very conservative and not appreciative of science. They burned whole libraries saying that these were "the works of Islam and the works of the enemy!" The Muslims of Andalusia showed great improvements in medicine, surgery, pharmacy, ontology, mathematics, geometry, astronomy, and logic. The

Caliphs would pay large sums of money for one book and spend fortunes on one scholar, summoning these experts, talented and knowledgeable people from many different countries through their ambassadors. The palace of the Amir was also the assembly of scientists and scholars, the general Privy Council! The degree of interest towards science and books was obvious in the fact that reverend Abdurrahman-ı Salis built a library in Córdoba with six hundred thousand volumes. There were seventy large libraries in the country that were used by the general public and students. Europeans used to come to Andalusia to study science and acquire skills. That is why Andalusian Muslims contributed greatly to the development of European civilization. We can even say that they were the mentors and masters of Europe. The present works of Islam that survived until today in Spain cause awe and admiration in everyone, making them say “thank God for these.” If people see Cami-i Kebir, which has been converted into a church now in Córdoba or Alhambra Palace in Granada, they can understand the extent of the Andalusian civilization. Thank God, I was able to come from Tashkent and see all of these. During my visit, I was so pleased with these feelings and sweet dreams. Sometimes my days were spent with bitter tears, but as time passed I found comfort and delight in my life.⁷

I stayed in Córdoba for a week, busying myself visiting the mosque. I could not get enough of what I saw! The second work of art was “Kasrül-hamra” (now known as Alhambra Palace) that belonged to the Melik Ibn Ahmer in Granada.

7 The narrator’s emphasis here on the history of Islamic cultural embrace of science, books, libraries, and philosophy is based on historical reality and also intriguing in the context of Gaspıralı’s own context and his determination to argue for religious and cultural modernism in the 1890s.

Every year hundreds of people from all over Europe come to visit this palace.⁸ Alhambra is composed of layers of quads, many buildings, and partitions. Yet the whole building in general is charming, graceful, and beautiful, as if it came out of the skillful hands of a seasoned master. It is impossible not to be in awe looking at the ornaments carved in marble, shapes decorated with tiny stones! One cannot draw these intricate details with pen on paper, yet these masters carved them in stone! They have stayed intact for five hundred years and there are also some writings and verses of the Koran written in gold and silver in appropriate places. For example, on the gate named Babü's Sara, the inscriptions in Kûfî and Afrikî style says that it was built in 749 (1348-49). Since the ornaments and embellishments of Alhambra palace are signs of unique workmanship, European masters always come here to learn the techniques.

During my first visit to Alhambra, I took a guide with me. I talked to the warden of the palace and got permission to visit. I was feeling admiration and awe as I walked around. Even though the building gave me comfort, the hidden message "past times will never come back" was mixing the bitter poison with sweet honey. I told the palace officers that I came from Turkistan, and they granted me permission to visit the palace anytime I wanted. I spent a month visiting Alhambra, mostly during the days and some nights. I saw every corner of it. Sometimes, during the dawn, under the light of the moon I would walk through the courtyards and different rooms of the palace. According to Arab history, the climate, location, and the water of Granada cannot be compared to Damascus or Baghdad since it is a unique corner of the world. They say, "water stops the heat of the sun." No matter how hot this summer sun is in Granada it rains a lot and cools the weather down because it is surrounded by the Sierra Nevada Mountains,

8 The Alhambra monument is located in Granada, Spain and remains open to visitors.

which are always snowy and icy on top. When it is hot, the water coming down from the mountains counteracts the heat of the sun. That is why the city of Granada is a fruitful and fertile place; you can find all kinds of fruits and roses.

Close to Alhambra Palace, there used to be a secondary palace located inside a big garden. The caliphs used to reside here at times. Spanish people call this place “Ceneralif”. In Arabic it is called Cennetü'l-arif, so we can call Granada paradise on earth. I spent a month in Granada watching the scenery, contemplating on the path, full of emotion and various kinds of sadness.

One day, instead of going back to the city, I decided to stay in the palace. I walked around the palace until the evening and prayed. Since it was summer and there was moonlight, I decided to sleep on my prayer rug where I performed the salaah every day in the place called Lions' Square. There was a great fountain in the middle of this square. It had eight lions made out of marble and water used to come out of the lions' mouths. Even though nowadays the fountain is dry, under the moonlight it looked very graceful and impressive, so I sat down to admire it. As I imagined and reveled in the fantasy of the people in the palace, European ambassadors, wise men and scholars of Islam walking around in this courtyard during the time of the caliphate, I heard quiet human voices and footsteps from the nearby Gülbahçe (rose garden) courtyard. The night was so calm that you could hear a fly. Who are these people? Palace attendants were away from this area; they would not admit anybody in the palace at night. As for me, some days, instead of going back to the city I was staying in the palace, purchasing food and water from these attendants. As the noise came closer to me, I crouched into a quiet, shadowy corner waiting in fear and shock. By God, what was this! Twelve beautiful girls came out of the Gülbahçe courtyard into the Lions' Square! My God, what was this? I froze.

The girls lined up around the fountain, and one of them started praying. After the prayer they retreated to Gülbahçe where they had come from. My eyes were seeing, but I couldn't believe them. The courtyard was as quiet as a graveyard. In the name of God, I got up from my place and, quietly stepping on the marble stones, started to follow them to see where they were coming from and where they were going.

Walking around Gülbahçe courtyard, the girls entered the Harem Mansion⁹ one by one. The air was quiet and the world was fast asleep. The moonlight was shining coyly. Walking on tiptoes, I entered the mansion, following the girls. When I went into the second section, they saw me and scattered around saying, "Oh my God, who is this person? A European!" I was scared too, but I collected myself, and I said, "No, sisters, I am not foreign, I am a Muslim. Don't be scared. By God, I don't know how and why I came to this place, it is just a coincidence." They calmed down a little and looked at each other. At that moment, one of the marble stones on the floor moved and a turban popped out. I was so shocked that I didn't know what to do. What strange things were these? It had been five hundred years since the end of the caliphate, and no one had lived in this place since then! Who are these girls, what is this turban? The turban was on the head of an old and sage Arab. As he came out of the ground the girls pointed towards me. After looking at me with his full attention, the old Arab said:

"God bless you son, are you Mullah Abbas?"

"Yes, father, I am Abbas." When I looked at him carefully, I noticed that this old Arab was Sheikh Celal whom I knew in Paris. "By God, Sheikh father, my mind doesn't grasp all that this is!" I said.

"Son, you have so much to see, be patient, you will understand. Come close to me." I walk to the middle of the section. The girls were eyeing me from head to toe. Sheikh Celal pointed

9 Harem as a term in this case refers to the residence of the sultan at Alhambra.

at the hole in the ground and told me to “jump in there.” Sensing my fear and hesitation he added, “Don’t be scared, the girls and I will jump down, too.” What could I do? I let myself go as if I were falling into my grave. My feet touched a stone staircase. I descended thirty or forty steps. There was such a darkness that is impossible to find on earth. My head was full of ideas, and my heart was full of fear. Where was I going? Why was I going there? What was going to happen to me? My God! As soon as I got my head together, I noticed a red light on the top of the staircase. I heard footsteps. I saw that they were coming. The light was coming from a torch; Sheikh Celal and the girls descended one by one, carrying torches.

“Don’t be afraid son, walk. There is only one road, you can’t get lost,” said the Sheikh and we went down forty more steps into either a section with a stone ornamented arch or a dungeon. Sheikh Celal opened the hole in the wall by removing two cut stones. The girls went through that hole one by one. He told me to go through and hold the light. Then he himself came to the other side and closed the hole. From here we climbed up ten steps. Another big section! The girls spread their prayer rugs and started their morning prayers. Since I was in shock of all of the things that happened, I did not know what to think! Although Sheikh Celal was a friend of mine from Paris, I was sure of my anxiety and fear. We are going underground but where? I meant to ask them, but I couldn’t find the time.

The second section that we were in was also built of stone. On the top of the stone staircase there was a pile of dirt. Sheikh Celal started to push down the dirt with the shovel that was waiting there. I also helped him with his task. In a short time, we closed the entrance to the staircase through which we had passed. The road that we had traveled was completely closed! If somebody upstairs found the first staircase coming down, they could find the first section; however it would be impossible to go through and find the road after that! After the prayers, the girls sat on the floor. One of them took the basket hanging on the wall and put the fruit and bread in front of her

friends. They gave us some fruit as well. They ate, prayed, and talked like people. They were definitely people but what kind of people! I ate a couple of peaches, the kind of which I had never seen in the world. I couldn't hide my curiosity and asked Sheikh Celal:

"Sheikh, I saw that we went underground; yet tell me where this strange road is leading. It is obvious where you get if you ride the camels in Turkistan or if you ride the trains in Europe. I cannot comprehend the road that I fell onto!"

"Yes son, it is a curious road, I am sure you have never seen one like this. Be patient. The section that we descended through eighty steps was the treasury in the times of the caliphate. It contained the most valuable goods and gold of the Andalusian caliphs. This second section is called Bab-ı Selâmet. (Gate of Salvation) Nobody on earth knows this place. Only a few people can have the honor."

Even though Sheikh Celal explained that the second section is Bab-ı Selâmet, I was still curious because I did not know where we were going. I said, "Thank you for the explanation but for the sake of God tell me, where are we going? I am full of respect towards you but I am losing my mind because of astonishment and curiosity!"

"Don't be alarmed my son, trust us; these girls are also worthy of trust and respect. Don't bring fearful things to your mind. The dark road will lead us to an enlightened land."

"My God, am I going crazy? How is this possible? An enlightened land under the earth I studied geography and geology but a place like this." In the meantime, the girls got ready for the road and waited for the Sheikh's orders.

"You will soon know a world that you didn't know before. When we come out of this darkness, Feride Banu (that is the name of one of the girls) will explain the history of this land and you'll understand the past. Be free of your fear and anxiety. We can't talk too much right now because we are underground; the air is spare and foul. We need to get out quickly. We don't want to faint in this darkness," said the Sheikh pointing the way.

From the Bab-ı Selâmet section, there was a straight tunnel. The girls started walking two by two holding their torches. We followed them on the stone-paved road. Some areas were very damp with dripping water. We walked for two hours without stopping. My feet started to give in but suddenly, thank God, a white light appeared. The girls started running while saying “Allahu ekber, Allahu ekber!” I looked around as we came out of the darkness. The light of the world was there. Oh my God, I thought we came out to the face of the earth, but I noticed that we were in a well. I don’t know what to call it if not a well. The length and the width of the place were almost eighty meters and surrounded by rocks and stones. When I looked up, I saw a little piece of the sky. Thank goodness for that! We were on earth! I was thankful like a man who has woken up from a terrible nightmare; then again, the place we were in was a waterless well about two hundred meters deep. Yet, with its air and light, it was still showing signs that we were on earth.

The girls sat on rocks and rested while Sheikh Celal performed his morning prayers. I followed his lead. Thinking that it would be inappropriate to ask further questions, I decided to be patient. Yet curiosity and bewilderment were still burning in me. My God, what else was going to happen to me? Being an understanding and compassionate person, Sheikh Celal talked to me after his prayers:

“My son, you will soon be reaching a happy community. Look at the bottom of this mountain across the way, there is a dark road again. If we walk on that road for fifteen minutes, we will find ourselves in Darürrahat.”

“Tell me, Sheikh, is the country in this world? I am getting confused.”

“Yes, son, it is in this world yet none of the historians or geographers of the East or the West know this place.”

“By God! Darürrahat is on the Spanish continent. We are three to four hours away from Granada. It doesn’t make sense. Nowadays the furthest corners of the world are known, calculated, planed, and charted. The fauna and flora and the people

are catalogued. There is a country underground close to the city of Granada in Spain and nobody knows about it? I cannot quite comprehend it!”

“Don’t stress your mind. We will describe it to you, be patient son.” After these words, Sheikh called the girls to his side and introduced me.

“Don’t be shy around this person; he is a Muslim from Turkistan, his name is Abbas. Even though lately the people of Islam just like the people of Europe are in a sea of darkness and carelessness, there are some scientific steps being taken and some knowledge is taught there. There are some Muslim scholars that study more or less, and are considered wise men.

This man, Abbas Effendi, is a man highly educated in Tashkent and then in Paris. So, I hope he can comprehend our situation here. Try not to see his mistakes, forgive his tactlessness, and follow your conscience. I hope that he will try to join the Islamic civilization community and be a worthy person. He will see what he hasn’t seen, he will know what he has not known, his mind will clear.” Even though I received education in Tashkent and became acquainted with new sciences in Paris, the fact that this reverent Sheikh looked at me and introduced me to these girls as “an ignorant and uncivilized person” bothered me very much, but what could I do? I studied grammar, logic, Islamic theology, geography, history, chemistry, philosophy, geometry, calculus, and other sciences. I was thinking that if I went to Turkistan, I would be considered a first-rate scholar, but here they look at me as a child learning his alphabet! What strange people! My God, give me patience! Then the reverent Sheikh said to me:

“These girls are students of madrasah. This year they completed their education by getting the honor of being top students in their exams. According to the old tradition of our land, they were visiting the old Andalusia, Granada, and Alhambra Palace, as an award. To see the holy land that housed our ancestors for five hundred years is a sweet delight for all of us but only a few can have the honor. From the girls’ mansion

where we descended, it is possible to see the whole of Granada and most of the sacred Andalusia. That is what these girls were doing when you ran into them. We have never had a visitor before; there is no road and the road that you saw is not known. So welcome son, let it be good for you and for all of us. The people you will see are human beings but they are different from the people that you know. They are all Muslims, but they are not like the ones in Turkistan, Egypt, India, or Iran. You will see for yourself. You know a little bit of Arabic, you can talk to the girls, your lack of language will not be a problem, the scholars will understand whatever you say. Also, we can see your ideas and intentions from the way you look, the way you walk. Try to follow the rules of general morality, manners, and compassion. Feride Banu will give you the information about the place we are heading so that you know what kind of a country you fell into.”

After the Sheikh said these words, the girls introduced themselves to me and expressed pleasantries. To introduce myself and the fame of Turkistan, I composed a few lines of poetry praising the beauty of their faces and expressing my happiness. The girls listened to me while looking at each other. One of them said, “This must be the custom in Turkistan.”

We rested for a while in this place, call it the bottom of a well or in between mountains, then we took to the road. Our road was a tunnel dug in the mountain across the way. When the girls went into the tunnel the torches that they held started burning. I had not noticed it until this point, the torches were burning on their own, they didn’t have any kindling, gas or oil in them. To my surprise, these torches were full of electric power and were built in a way that has never been seen in our world! Looking at these torches, I realize that these people and their land that we were going to was not behind and possibly ahead of Europe in terms of philosophy, mechanics, and skills, even though they do not have any connection or communication with Europe. Strange! What else would I see?

We walked underground in the dark for half an hour. Then we came to a section that is similar to the section I mentioned in the beginning of our journey. This was also a cave carved out of stone. As soon as we all went in, Sheikh Celal said, "We are going to Darürrahat right now. It is a rule that no one should know the road and gates. We have to blindfold everyone." The girls use their head covers to cover their eyes and I used my oil cloth. Sheikh Celal moved to a corner of the section and made noises indicating opening a door and putting a rock on the ground. I didn't see anything. After that he came close to us, made the girls hold hands and holding my hand with one of his hands and holding a girl's hand with his other hand, told us to walk slowly following each other. We walked with the guidance of the Sheikh. For a few steps we turned one direction; at the end we walked uphill a long way in the tunnel. "Watch out, there's a staircase in front of you," he said. We went up twenty steps. "Now we have arrived," said Sheikh Celal, "we arrived safe and sound," he said to somebody I didn't know. A gate was open and a pleasant breeze came in. We walked again blindfolded. I don't know the places we passed but we stopped, there was a fountain or a river. From the fragrances around me I realize that we were on the face of the earth. On one hand, I was anxious and fearful, on the other hand I was very curious to see where we were. My mind was so confused that I cannot describe my situation with words! "We are here; welcome, remove your blindfolds," said the Sheikh. I pulled the oil cloth from my face and looked at the world to find myself in a large room decorated in Islamic customs. There was sunlight coming in from the windows and I heard the water from the fountain. Two old Arabs that looked like Sheikh Celal in terms of their age and attire were standing next to the fountain with the face cloths in their hands. The girls dropped their head covers right away and started twittering like nightingales. They ran to the fountain, drank some water and washed their faces.

The old Arab started asking questions to the girls: “Did you travel safely, did our old Granada look pleasant, and how is the old country?” And the girls talked about what they had seen and how much they had enjoyed everything.

As for myself, I didn’t know who I was or where I was due to my state of desperation and confusion. Thank God Sheikh Celal paid attention to me:

“Come here son, wash your face, it will refresh you if you are tired.” Nevertheless, after the wash, my mind was quite calmed. The girls went into the second room and the Sheikh and I followed. There we saw that a table was set and meal prepared for all of us. Around this room, there were soft red leather cushions. We ate the meat, rice, and many kinds of fruits and retired to the cushions. The two aforementioned old Arabs swept the room according to Islamic customs and left. As I looked outside from the window next to me, my admiration increased! A divine, spacious green area, surrounded on all sides by forested mountains. The highest tops of the mountains were ornamented with snow and ice looking like silver jewelry. We were in a heavenly meadow surrounded by snowy mountains. When I took my eyes away from the mountains and looked at the land, I saw that it was divided into gardens, vineyards, and rose gardens. Running among these were lovely silver waters. Among the gardens, stone-house villages and the Arabic-style narrow minarets reaching up to the sky created such a picture that the skill of my pen wasn’t adequate to describe! I just kept staring at this country! Zerefsan in Turkistan, Paris in Europe are very nice and beautiful places but Darürrahat was more beautiful than both of them.

I asked Feride Hanim who was nearby, about the size of this country. She said “if we want to say it according to your Turkistan calculations, the length is three hours and the width is two hours.”

Then I said, “I beg you, tell me the real history of this beautiful and strange country, I am burning in the fires of curiosity and eagerness.” I looked at the girls with utmost attention, and I noticed that the majority of these girls were beautiful.

As Feride prepared herself to speak, we all got ready to listen, because, according to the customs of this country, if a wise man or a wise woman is going to give a lesson or tell history, he or she has to be loyal to the real events and tell the story in a proper literary style. Feride Hanim started talking:¹⁰

Our ancestors started their conquest from Northwest Africa and continued to the continent of Andalusia without any retreat. They lived a prosperous and joyful life in the thousands of villages and large cities while ruling the whole continent. Andalusia became a school for the world; the people there were exemplary teachers of the world. Poems, verses, and songs that were the signs of delight and prosperity were sung and recited from one end of the country to the other end waking up Europeans from their blind sleep. Merry people prayed and thanked God for their joy. At that time, Europeans admired the contented lifestyle of the Muslims expressed in their joyful songs. After that they started following the ways of our ancestors, opening their eyes to the world and enjoying the gifts of life.

Happy with their labor and efforts, illustrious with their skills and industry, enlightened with the sciences, our valiant ancestors ruled in Andalusia for five hundred years. However, only God is everlasting. Great governments, pleasant countries, and even famous Andalusia lost its shiny luster along with its mortal nature; it became prone to corruption and collapsed. Whatever it is human made cannot be permanent because we carry in ourselves both being and nothingness, both the reason for progress and decline! We have both the poison that destroys us and the spiritual strength that delights us in our

10 Feride Hanim will give the second account of Andalusian history, Gaspıralı’s retrospective lament and critique of the historical loss of an Islamic Golden Age, but Feride’s version of history here also weaves in the fictional creation story for Darürrahat.

own bodies. Truthfulness and selfishness, fairness and tyranny, compassion and cruelty, laziness and fear, all belong to human beings. Whichever of these is found in abundance, the human community forms itself according to that. If the people in a community have good morality and pleasant manners, the community has a long life and continues with progress. Yet if the opposite happens, the community becomes like an apple bruising from inside and starts to collapse. Alas! The ones that owned before become slaves and servants. Cowards replace the valiant ones; the scum replace the compassionate; ignorant ones replace the wise men; laziness takes over labor. If people find themselves in this position, let them shed bloody tears! In the end, unfortunately they will dissolve and disappear like snowflakes!

After three hundred years of fame and fortune, the people of Andalusia took that road. Customs, sensibilities, concerns started to change. Excess, laziness, carelessness, vanity, hatred, and discord started to deteriorate the people and the government. As in the saying “an unhealthy tree does not bear fruit”, greedy governors and mindless leaders increased. Instigators overcame wise men; there were more liars than honest people, they cared more for selfishness than public benefits. Hypocrisy and fake deeds of belief overcame good deeds and patriotism! This poison went into the body of Andalusia for two hundred years. One state divided into three or four governments and started fighting with each other. Each city became the enemy of the other! Without knowing, they dug bloody graves for each other!

Heretofore weak and defeated Emperor Ferdinand of Castile took advantage of the lack of unity and corruption among Muslims and started to interfere in the business of the Caliphate, causing the country to go even more corrupt. Andalusia lasted for five hundred years. Forty or fifty years before its collapse there were some wise men anticipating the end but this

didn't help. These people were very few and even fewer people listened to these warnings! They were telling the truth and the truth was bitter.

After gaining power, the Emperor of Castile invaded many cities and it was known that he was getting ready to attack Granada. In the year 889 (1484) during the time of the caliph Ebu Abdullah ez Zagal, the Grand Assembly convened in Alhambra Palace to discuss the retaliation against Abdullah es Sagir who wanted to govern and rule, and the threat of King Ferdinand.

If a need to surrender the city to Ferdinand emerged, what was going to happen to the people? While discussing this issue, the necessity to retreat and find safety came to the foreground. You all know the Sierra Mountains close to Granada and Alhambra Palace. These snow-covered mountains are impossible to pass on foot or horse. The assembly decided to build a hidden tunnel underneath this mountain and take all the women and children to the other side of this mountain, and putting them in ships to escape to Maghribi. To this end, it was decided to bring eighty slaves from Sudan and to start digging the tunnel. Nobody knew about this other than the members of the assembly. In twenty to thirty years all of these people died and there was no one left who was aware of this tunnel. Only the Caliph and an old gardener knew of it.

The tunnel that we used to come from the Alhambra Palace was that tunnel. When they dug the tunnel and came out to see this meadow, they saw that it was not possible to open up a second road and the Caliph decided to stop it there. The slaves from Sudan were freed and sent to their homes. During that time because of the wars, nobody had time or energy to pay attention to this road.

1491 was the last year of Granada and Andalusia. That year, the final post of the Muslim rule, the Alhambra Palace was taken by the Spanish. The Caliph Abdullah es Sagir surrendered the throne and the government to King Ferdinand. Defeated by hunger and believing the concessions promised

by Ferdinand, desperate Granada had to surrender following Córdoba, Málaga, Cádiz, and Valencia. According to the stories told by people who lived in those days, so many things happened! The soldiers of King Ferdinand gained power day by day and the whole of Granada was under siege. Entry to the city was banned and Muslim people there were extremely desperate. To keep up hope of finishing the war alive, Spaniards built a city near Granada called Santiago and openly showed that they were not going to retreat. King Ferdinand and his wife Isabel sat in the throne and lived in peace in this aforementioned city. Because of this, the Muslims were feeling sad and oppressed. They did not know what to do. The Caliph convened the assembly and decided to ask for help and equipment from the Ottomans but at that time Sultan Bayezid was at war with Egypt and couldn't help Andalusia. Even though this Spanish king was a very powerful ruler, he knew about the bravery and skillfulness of the Arabs. That's why he accomplished his business with money and deceit. He knew that without malice, trickery or spies among them, the Arabs were all strong like lions. Because of this, he sent letters to the public telling them that they would be treated nicely if they surrendered without putting up a fight. Otherwise, he would destroy the whole place. He was also bribing many selfish people to be on his side.

The latest Caliph Ebu Abdullah es Sagir's selfish attitude and his intentions to add to his own fortune instead of thinking of the well-being of the state resulted in his consultations with King Ferdinand about surrendering the city. He was secretly making agreements regarding the public and his own dynasty. Even though the public was not aware of the Caliph's wrongdoings, they had the idea to invade the Alhambra Palace and elect a second Caliph. For this purpose, they gathered forty to fifty thousand people. However, their leader disappeared suddenly one night and they were left without direction.

Many among the public and the high officials preferred surrendering the city but the majority wanted to fight and defend it. While they were discussing the subject of defense or surrender in a meeting at the Alhambra Palace, the reverent Caliph announced that there was no reason to fight. While all of the viziers were silent, one of the patriotic commanders, Musa bin Ebu'l Gazan said:

“No, there is a reason to fight. If we surrender, we cannot be sure of the safety of our lives and property. We will be slaves and our belongings will be raided and plundered! These eyes that are afraid of the enemy’s sword right now, will see our wives and our mothers sitting on the enemy’s laps filling their wine glasses in libation gatherings! Do you trust the agreements? We must learn from the situation of the surrendered cities! Do you think that the hostility and resentment they harbored all these years will calm down after taking Granada? Especially after breaking our agreement and taking Granada you will see what kind of evil things will happen to you! Since we have three million Muslims in Granada, why do we feel the need to give away our freedom to our enemies with our own hands? What we need to do is to defend the country and the state till our last breath. The grace of God will be upon us. Sacrificing your life and going through your life in morality is a thousand times better than being unfaithful to your country and being a slave to your enemies.” However, nobody took a lesson from Musa’s words and efforts. They listened quietly with their heads down.

We do not know how it happened, but the assembly decided to surrender the city. They sent the news to King Ferdinand and Isabel by special ambassadors. The rumor says that King Ferdinand was very happy to hear the news:

“The Arabs are not like they used to be. They have lowered themselves; they are surrendering. I wasn’t expecting this.”

As Commander Musa came home, he gathered his dynasty and his dependents and counseled them on how to find safety when the city surrenders. He talked to one of the older ones and

advised them not to steer from first the religion, second science and third work and effort. He had one of his favorite horses saddled up and took off with his guns. As this hard-working father and notorious Commander Musa went out of the city, he ran into forty to fifty enemies on horseback. They said, "Stop! Who are you and where are you going?" He said, "My enemy knows my name, and I know where I am going" and attacked them like a lion killing twenty of them.

According to the agreement between the Caliph Ebu Abdullah and King Ferdinand regarding the surrendering of the city and the Sultanate, no damage would be done to the Islamic prayer houses and madrasahs, they would be run according to Islamic laws and customs, and the people would be free to immigrate to the south of the Maghreb. When the surrender of Granada to the Spaniards was announced to the public as such, young and old everyone went into their homes crying. The holy Caliph gathered all his belongings and left the city with a large camel caravan. The Alhambra Palace was left empty, gates wide open, rooms unlocked, courtyards full of things. The old gardener didn't join the caravan. Saying, "Let God take my life here," and fell asleep after praying in his room in Alhambra.

In the household of Commander Musa, one hundred forty friends and family members gathered. Every one of them took various tools, books, and belongings with them. Following Musa's advice, they left their home at midnight and arrived at then-emptied Alhambra Palace. The old gardener, who was aware of the situation, took them to the aforementioned tunnel and through it to Darürrahat among the mountains. They took the necessary articles and many books of Islam from the palace and brought them to their new homeland. Nobody knew about this event in the city and the Spaniards were also not aware of it.

While this handful of Muslims retreated into this hidden place in order not to surrender to the enemy, the Caliph Ebu Abdullah was giving the keys to the city to King Ferdinand.

After that, the Caliph was sent to a place allocated for him and his family. When they arrived at a highpoint overlooking the city, Ebu Abdullah took one last glance at the city.

Squadrons of Spanish soldiers were entering the city. Ebu Abdullah was overwhelmed with emotion and started to cry. At that moment his mother next to him said,

“Cry, cry until your eyes pop out! Crying suits women. If you cannot protect your state and your country, you deserve to cry like a woman.”

The second day after the surrender, the king of Castile, Ferdinand and his wife Isabel, came to the Alhambra Palace, sat on their thrones to accept visits from esteemed Muslim men.

The Islamic society we call Darürrahat comes from the late Musa's friends and kinsman. He knew that after invading the whole of Andalusia and gaining strength, the Spaniards were going to be cruel to the Muslims. That is why he helped us reach this safe haven. After all, as soon as they took over the power in Andalusia and stopped the influence and power of Islam in the area, the Spaniards tore up the agreements and started using strong-arm tactics and violence! They banned praying in the mosques and education in the madrasahs. They confiscated the waqf and gave them to the clergy. For small misdemeanors or with false accusations they took away the money and the belongings of Muslims. Screams and cries of pain were heard from one end of Andalusia to the other. The tears of Muslims were mixed with the tears of Jews. There was one thing to be thankful for: the freedom and permission to immigrate to Maghreb. Hundreds of thousands of Muslims, thousands of Jews were leaving their houses and the country of their ancestors' graves to their enemies.

The prosperous Andalusia turned into a dilapidated country and was dissolved in a short time. Large cities were emptied, villages, orchards, and farms were in ruin, the fountains ran dry! Prosperous and content lifestyle left the country. Bigotry and ignorance reigned. The destiny of fair Kadis (Islamic judges) fell in the hands of cruel Inquisition judges. Just like that,

the day was over and the night began. Whatever was God's will, thanks a million times to God, with the help of reverent Musa, our ancestors were saved from tyranny and agony and found a safe haven in this secret place. God's mercy to their souls, because of their efforts, this country surrounded by mountains became a paradise on earth for us. Our days and lives are filled with happiness and felicity. Saying this and signaling with her hand and head, the moon-faced, nightingale-voiced Feride finished her story. I was extremely impressed with a history of this Islamic community and wanted to know more about the present and future of these people. With this intention I turned to reverent Sheikh Celal:

—Sheikh, now I understand that this community of Darür-rahāt is the specimen of notorious Andalusian Islam. What a strange case! Nobody knows about you but you are aware of everything going on in our world. What I cannot comprehend is that even though the times of bigotry and war between religions are over, you do not get out to the world from this hidden place and seek contact with European or Islamic countries. Nobody can do any cruelty to you even if they knew about your place surrounded by these mountains. We were in France together. You have seen their fair styles and behaviors. You understand our time.

—Yes, son. We know our time and Europe very well. I have been around, and I have seen many things. All of us here know about Europe thanks to geography and travel literature. However, to tell the truth, we don't want to announce that we have been among these mountains for many centuries and we don't want to mix with other people. Besides we do not have a right to do this because Father Musa, who is the reason for our comfort and happiness, bequeathed that we would not leave this place until the year 1500 (2075). We respect his last will and testament!

—Strange! What did he say in his last will? How did he decide on the year 1500? Tell me for God's sake.

—Nobody knows this. His last will and testament will be opened and read in 1500, and the cover of the will states that we cannot leave this country till that year. Nobody knows what is inside the envelope because this will, with forty seals, is kept under forty locks and is given to the protection of forty imams.

This community of Islam attracted my attention even more and I said, “By God, what a strange situation!”

—What kind of men are these forty imams?

—Our country is comprised of forty villages and one city. Each community has one imam and each of these imams has a lock and a seal.

—Is there an owner or a leader of the country?

—Yes, our leader is reverent Ali, and he comes from the family of Father Musa.

—How are the order and law of the country designed?

—According to the honorable law of Islam and reconciliation.

Even though it wasn't too late, the sun was getting ready to go down behind the mountains. Since Darürrahat was surrounded by huge mountains on all sides, during the time of mid-afternoon, two hours before the evening, the sun disappears leaving this strange country in shadows.

We were very well rested after our underground voyage and decided to get on our way towards the city before it was completely dark. After everyone was out of the place we were staying to rest, the doors were locked.

This place was a guard station and the beginning of the underground road. As we left this place, we found ourselves in a beautiful meadow. The girls walked in front of us towards the village, talking to each other. The Sheikh and I followed them with difficulty.

When we came to the said village, I noticed that it had a style of building that has never been seen before. It had a circular, large open space paved with crushed material. There was no sign of dust, mud or trash. In the middle of the circle was a large stone mosque and on one side of this mosque was

a madrasah and on the other side the assembly place and the great hall. Around the mosque were old date trees and around the circle there were orchards and gardens. In these gardens they had built houses that had the same exact distance to each other and the mosque. Obviously, they were built according to a certain order and calculations. They stood beautifully inside the garden facing the mosque and the circle. When I paid attention to the buildings in this village, I noticed a very curious thing. Other than the mosque, none of these buildings reached all the way to the ground like what we normally see. They were all built on the stone belt, one archine (Turkish yard) high from the ground. It seemed as if all the houses were suspended in air. When I inquired about this situation Sheikh Celal said:

—Listen son, just like our spiritual lives and morals should be built on God’s word and Islamic rules, our physical world should be suitable to the law of the instruments. In the nature of things, there are harms and benefits to people. We need to know these and while escaping one we need to invite and use the other. Underground and in meadows like our country there is plenty of water, hence a lot of moisture. The plants and metals rotting in the soil and transforming from one form to another creating poison for human beings and cause pain and various illnesses. That is why we don’t build houses on ground level. We build them over stone polls or belts so that the bottom of the house allows the movement of the air and the poisonous spirits and moisture cannot come inside our homes. I was very surprised to hear these words from the Sheikh. He continued, “My son, during our migration our country was full of reeds, swamps and had foul air. The immigrants suffered unending diseases and unpleasant ailments. Our wise men and the leaders paid attention to this problem, understood the reason for these diseases and even discovered the solutions. They dug channels to help run the water off and dried up the swamps. They got rid of the reeds and rotten plants along the waterway, brought fresh water from the mountains and built fountains. As soon as the water and air were clean, the

community became healthy and comfortable. Presently, there are virtually no illnesses in Darürrahat. I realized that you are in awe, you are wondering how this is possible: Son, I am sorry but I have to call you ignorant! You don't have any idea about anything. In time you will understand. All the graces of God are great but the greatest of all is the intelligence that God gave to human beings. With the power of intelligence, you can go across oceans, discover riches hidden underground. You can also find solutions for many aches, pains, and illnesses: However, the will is only God's, human beings are only instruments. Nevertheless, the intelligence enlightened by knowledge and refinement is joy and happiness for people.

We all arrived at the assembly hall in the square. It was a building with three to five rooms built in the style of Andalusia. Two of the rooms were separated from each other by a glass wall and they were pleasantly decorated. We sat in one, and the girls retired in the other one. At that time, the wise old imam of the village and the men who recite the azan came by. Since they had never seen people from other countries, they focused their utmost attention on me, however, because they were very well mannered, they tried to hide their attention and curiosity. Sheikh Celal told them the coincidence of our meeting at Alhambra Palace and said that it was better to bring the man who has seen the secret road then to leave him there. He also added that he knew me from Paris and that I was a Muslim.

The imam of the village, after some pleasantries, asked me questions about Tashkent, Bukhara, and Turkistan.

—They say the land of Bukhara is an honorable country with its science and knowledge. Rumor has it that it is a garden of wisdom. I wonder about the organization of the madrasahs and whether all of the sciences are taught there?

I told him all I knew about the style and structure of education in Bukhara and Turkistan. The old imam shook his head:

—Strange! Don't you need doctors, chemists, architects, and engineers in your area? Don't your leaders and governments need public management, accounting, and skillful clerks

to run the government? According to what you say, in your madrasahs there are no sciences other than the science of theology. They do not teach medicine, geometry, chemistry, natural sciences, economy, and they do not educate people other than spiritual training. Is that so?

—Yes, sir. They do not teach any other sciences except for religion and Islamic law.

—Thank God that you are not deprived of theology! How can you live in this world without any refinement and knowledge of various sciences? Such a strange situation! How can your governments manage and protect themselves? Why have the refinements and knowledge, the education of all sciences been abandoned? In the old Islam, there was a great effort shown in these areas.

—They say refinement and knowledge cause corruption, sir.

—What a shame, what a horrible oversight! Son, can a person walk blindfolded? You do not know about the soil but you try to plant; you don't know the water but you drink it; you don't know the world but you live your life in this world. Such a shame, such a neglect! May God give you reason! I am extremely sad about your situation. Ordinary people might not know this, but don't elite people, educated people, nobles know it? There is a need to learn the religious duties but training soldiers, discovering new medicine and solutions, governing people require other sciences and refinements. Some sciences are for religion, some sciences are for life, some sciences are for spirit, and some sciences are for body, what a pity son, in our time Muslims are not at the highest level. You are not going to see that in this country.

—I think the lifestyle and advancements that I will see in Darürrahat will be far ahead of Europe.

—You shouldn't take any offense son. Hopefully, one day the people of Turkistan will be aware of sciences and refinements and get on the road to progress. Ignorance and neglect are big and difficult problems to overcome but they will pass.

Even if you don't have the education and refinements, the public in general has the initial education that is reading and writing. The first step of knowledge is reading and writing.

—No, sir. Maybe half of the public knows how to read. Only 10% of the people can write.

—Can this be true? Are you mistaken, son?

—No, sir. This is our situation!

—If this is the case you are quite doomed: you said that theology is taught here. Don't you know that reading, writing, and science are duties of all Muslim men and women? If you all know this, why do you fail to perform it? I can't wrap my mind around this! Ignoring refinements, ignoring education, what a strange land!

After contemplating for a while, he continued in the sad tone:

—Son, don't be offended, whatever I said I did it because of my sadness. I'm ashamed of my Muslim brothers' situation. The old Imam held my hand and said, "Come son, I will show you the elementary school of our village." We left the room and arrived at a big and beautiful stone building on the right side of the mosque. "This is the school," he said. Inside there were large rooms. One of them had the library and all sorts of equipment for farming and arts.

—Every child age between eight and twelve goes to school. Boys and girls go to separate schools. Elementary school is four years. Boys go to school to learn reading, writing, arithmetic, and religion. After that they study agriculture and related chemistry and philosophy. They are trained to have the skills related to village life. Girls learn how to read and write. After that they study home economics, sewing, embroidery, and necessary medical knowledge for motherhood.

While the imam was explaining all of these, Sheikh Celal came inside to tell us that the machine has arrived and it was time to go to the city. We left the school and came near the Assembly Hall. Covering their heads, the girls all got ready for the road. I hadn't noticed before but there were iron tracks laid

out in the circle like the European railroads. But these were different! I noticed that the cars were coming yet there were no cars working with fire like the ones in Europe. The cars themselves came thundering: no horses, no fire! We said goodbye to the Imam and got on the car. We were going to the center of the country, Darus'saadet (Happy Country):

It was as if we were flying to the capital city with the fireless, horseless railroad. We passed two villages just like the previously mentioned village among gardens and vineyards. We saw a couple more railroads crossing our path. According to Sheikh Celal's description, all of the villages in Darürrahat were connected to each other and to the city by railroads that move with the electric power and telephone wires.

When we arrived at Darus'saadet, it was almost evening time and muezzins were reciting the azan in the minarets. The railroad center was built in the lifestyle of Andalusia and it was a perfectly beautiful stone building. I didn't know the reason but there were no cars or horse carriages in the city like the ones we see in Europe. It seemed that everybody had to go to places on foot. The girls' fathers or brothers were all there to greet them. After some pleasantries, they quickly talked about the things they saw in Alhambra Palace and how they all felt looking at Granada from Alhambra. They also told them how they met a traveler from Turkistan and brought him along with them. After that people started greeting me. Even though they were trying to hide it, it was obvious that they were very curious.

Then the girls said their goodbyes to me one by one expressing their kind wishes to see me again before leaving for their homes. Sheikh Celal took me to the city. The road we walked on was forty steps wide and was paved with cement or asphalt. There were no stones, trash, or dust on the road. Along the side of the road there were cypress trees and sidewalks around seven archines wide. Alongside their pavements, there were pleasantly decorated iron fences and behind these fences you could see houses in the middle of rose gardens. I was in awe!

This city was not like any of the cities with mountain-high buildings in Europe or the cities with old rickety buildings in Turkistan. It was completely different. We walked along two of these beautiful, clean roads and came to the Bazaar Square. We were going to the guesthouse in this area. It was starting to get dark. Looking at the layout of the city I couldn't see any lamps. "Don't you have lamps in your city" I inquired. He said, "we don't have lamps like in Europe but the city will not get dark, you will see." We arrived at the guesthouse on one side of the Bazaar Square. Sheikh Celal showed me a room with ornate decorations and told me, "You can relax here, son." He went to see the Kadi to explain my situation and how I found myself in Darürrahat officially. When I was finally alone, I started feeling anxious. Although I was sure that I wouldn't get any cruelty or harm from the enlightened Muslims of this country, I couldn't help worrying about what the future held for me. As I was contemplating my situation in darkness, I saw a strange light. The whole room was brightly lit. I noticed that a lamp in the ceiling started to give light; but there was neither kindling nor oil in it! As I looked outside to the city and the Square, I saw that the whole city was lit with an illumination that was less than sunlight but stronger than moonlight! How strange! I learned later that this city and the whole country were lit with electricity at dark nights. Oh science, oh intelligence! What is not possible when we have you? Even though I was getting sad and worried about my condition, I felt proud about this Islamic civilization's progress. Their lifestyle was far ahead of Europe, and I realized how backwards we were in Turkistan. I saw all of this and I am telling you. Maybe you don't believe it but the Muslims of this land are not satisfied with the skills and comfort and are constantly trying to improve their lives. How different is this compared to our situation?¹¹

11 An interesting moment where the narrator seems to turn out of the text and address Gaspıralı's audience (the readers of *Tercuman*) directly.

In half an hour, Sheikh Celal came back and told me that a guide was appointed for me and we would appear before the Kadi early in the morning. Then he ordered the servant to listen to my orders and left for his home. He had a son and daughter in Darus'saadet. It was possible for me to order whatever I wanted from the servant without leaving my room. I didn't even have to call the service because the servant prepared dinner and various juices and fruits for me. I ate a little bit of soup and some fried food. I was constantly preoccupied with images of Tashkent, Paris, France and sat there thinking about my situation.

Early in the morning, when I looked outside the window of my room, I saw the Bazaar Square and the people there. They were all Arabs. Even though I wanted to go mingle and talk with them, I decided to stay and wait for Sheikh Celal. Besides we had to appear before the Kadi. I wondered why I was going there. The bazaar square was surrounded by large, beautiful, single level buildings. Across the Caravanserai, there was the bazaar mosque with its divine gentle minaret reaching up to the sky like a cypress tree and standing there as a spiritual guide and a guard.

Instead of morning tea or coffee, the servant of the Caravanserai brought bread, butter, and milk. To my surprise, there was no tea or coffee in this country. Also, they didn't have any kind of alcohol. As I was having my breakfast, Sheikh Celal came with a big sack containing clean outfits.

"I brought these for you" he said.

It was the most appropriate and needed gift because I didn't have anything other than the French clothes that I had on me. Everything else I owned was in Granada, and I was quite dirty.

"Thank you, father Sheikh. You are very observant and compassionate," I said.

"The reverent Kadi sent all of these, you are our guest, hopefully you will be comfortable. It is obvious that you've found yourself in our land and you don't have any clothes with you."

“What heart, what conscience! Praise God, we couldn’t find this kind of attention in our country or in Europe. I was so surprised about everything I encountered in Darürrahat. The lamp that I saw in the room; it turns on by itself at night and it turns off by itself in the morning. It would be great, father Sheikh if I don’t lose my mind because of all these!”

“Hopefully nothing will happen to you son; besides you have so much more to see in this country. If you want there is a bath in the Caravanserai. Go get dressed and we will get going.”

I went to the bath with pleasure: Sheikh Celal waited for me in the room. I washed myself in the marble stone bath and put fragrant waters on myself, as is the custom of this country. I was looking like the locals here. We rested for half an hour in my room and we headed towards the Kadi. From the Caravanserai we came directly to the bazaar. Most of the stores were selling food and only a couple of them were selling drapery, haberdashery, and jewelry. Their coins were only three types: they were called one dinar, half dinar, and a quarter dinar. Since the Muslims of Darürrahat didn’t have any transactions with any other countries, these three types of coins were adequate for their commerce.

We left the Bazaar Square and got on the street called Tarik Ibn Ziyad. He was the man who led the conquest of Andalusia. That is why they named this street in his honor. One end of the street was the bazaar square and the other end was the Abdurrahman-i Salis Square. This is the name of the most notable Caliph in Andalusia. We came in front of one of the buildings around this square. An inscription in the marble said “The Gate of Law” in Kufi style Arabic letters in gold. This was the courthouse. I didn’t know why, but I was very scared. In the Great Hall, the Kadi was sitting on a high cushion and in front of him there was the clerk. A servant was waiting at the door.

Sheikh Celal showed me, “Sir, this is the man we ran into at Alhambra, Mullah Abbas from Turkistan.”

—Welcome guest! May God give you health and comfort. He motioned us to sit. We sat in front of him.

—Until you get acquainted with Darürrahat, you are our guest. I hope you will be comfortable; however, you must do whatever Sheikh Celal tells you; he is appointed as your guide. He will be your brother and your guide. Don't show your surprise openly towards our customs; respect them so that the public wouldn't be curious about you. I have some questions for you and I hope that you will answer truthfully. Pay attention please, the biggest crime in our country is to lie. The punishment for it is extremely hard. The liars go to jail. Although our jails are open, the ones who lied cannot find anybody to talk to.

The Kadi was talking quietly and pleasantly but I didn't know why the hair on my head stood on end, I was fearful.

—Ask anything sir. If it is something I know, I will tell it all.

—Which religion do you belong to?

The clerk started writing.

—I am a Muslim.

—how old are you?

—twenty-seven.

—Where are you from?

—The city of Tashkent.

—Your father?

—Passed away.

—When did you leave Tashkent?

—Two years ago.

—Name some of the people you know in Tashkent.

—Celaledin Ibn Tacettin, Ahmed Ibn Ali, Muhsin Ibn Latif, Serifcan Ibn Ahundcan, Muhammed Muhyiddin Hoca, Mullah Allam Yalcibay, Serif Hoca ...

—Alright. Do they all know you?

—They should.

Then the Kadi told the clerk: "ask people who have been to Tashkent." The clerk wrote Kadi's order. My nervousness and fear increased. Kadi turned to me:

—Where did you study?

—In Tashkent, I studied for twelve years in the madrasahs.

—Which sciences did you study?

—Arabic, Persian, grammar, syntax, speech, rhetoric, lexicon, logic, and commentary on the Koran.

—What else?

—Nothing more. In our madrasahs, they don't teach any sciences other than literature and Islamic laws.

—Strange! You stayed in school for twelve years and didn't learn arithmetic, geometry, natural sciences, history and such.

—No, sir.

—Maybe you studied some industry, medicine, engineering, chemistry, and architecture?

—No, sir. But in France I study some sciences.

—What did you study in France?

—Concise general history of the world, zoology, philosophy, a little bit of arithmetic, and health sciences.

—Who raised you?

—I was in my mother's care till the age of ten, then I went to Madrasah, all my breeding in civilization came from these, sir.

—How is your upbringing?

—Your honor, in the custom of our country, they give children some food, some clothes, sometimes they disparage, scold, and beat them, sometimes they cuddle and love them. This is our upbringing.

The honorable Kadi was shocked by my answer; he looked at Sheikh Celal's eyes as if he was afraid of me. He said nothing but if he had said anything it would definitely have been something like, "Why did you bring this wild savage into our country?" Sheikh understood the feelings of the Kadi and said:

—Sir, as you know proper upbringing in the East and the West is not known but Mullah Abbas is a good, moral man. I don't think he will do any harm to Muslims.

This statement comforted the Kadi quite a bit and after relaxing a while he said, “why did you leave your country? We know that it is not a common thing for a man from Turkistan to visit Europe.”

—I learned that there were some shrines of Muslim saints from the Islamic times in some neighborhoods of France. My intention was to visit them.

—How long did you stay in Europe?

—Two years.

—Is that so? Are there many Muslim saints in Europe?

—No, but when I came to Paris, I saw that the French people were very skillful and educated so I decided to stay there and study. I stayed for two years.

—How did you stay in Paris? There is a big difference between the lifestyles of Europeans and the people from Turkistan. Did you adapt?

—Yes, sir. Thank God, my days were spent pleasantly.

—This may be. However, son, has anything weird and strange ever happened? You need to tell the truth.

I froze after this question as if I was full of ice-cold water. Was it possible that he knew what had happened to me in Paris and my fondness for the French girl? I remember poor Margarite. But how could the Kadi know all of these? Even if he knew, what would be the harm? I wasn't hurting anybody. Fondness for a French girl is not against morality in Turkistan or Europe. I found myself engulfed in these thoughts.

—You're not answering me. Are you thinking about what to say?

—Yes, sir. While I was living in Paris, I had a relationship with the French girl named Margarite but I did not do anything against morals.

—How did this happen?

To answer his question, I told him the whole story of Margarite.

—Did you know about us before you came to this land?

—No, sir.

—How did you come here?

At this point I told my story. He listened and said:

—Good. May God protect you. You will be our guest till we find a proper job and work for you. Sheikh Celal is appointed as a guide and mentor to you, listen to what he says. For your safety and well-being, you should be afraid of lying like you would fear God, you need to avoid evil ideas like you avoid hell, you need to show affection to people like you love heaven. I am advising you as a brother, and I am ordering you as an officer of Islamic law. Our country is free of lies and injustice. Our lives are not like the lives of eastern or western Islam. Our lives are better than the life in Europe. You will see in time.

Gesturing to the Kadi, I showed that I accepted his orders. After much waiting, he ordered Sheikh Celal to sign me up to secondary school and told us that we were free to go.

We left “the Gate of Law” and headed towards the guesthouse. Even though there was no clear need for anxiety or fear, Kadi’s inquiry and words had a deep effect on me. How could they not? The people of Darürrahat were Muslims just like us but they have been hiding in this secret location among the mountains since the collapse of the Andalusian State. They had no contact with any of the tribes or countries in this world; they had their own private way of living and civilization and most importantly next to their lives and civilization, Turkistan people look like Bedouins and Europeans very low! I wonder what is the situation of women in this country? Why did the Kadi show special interest in my fondness for Margarite?

As we arrived in the area of the bazaar and the guesthouse, I was very curious about something I noticed. An Arab was saluting a long line of people one by one. I thought that he was a guest like me and asked Sheikh Celal.

—This man is repentant.

—What was his fault?

—He committed a big crime, while selling wheat, he cheated his customer half a dinar.

—What was his punishment?

—Kadi himself did the inquiry and announced his sin.

—Did they put him in jail or give him a lashing after that?

—No, son. We don't have prisons or lashing in this country. There is no need for those.

—By God, how is this possible?

—As soon as his treachery is known, the whole public becomes stranger to him, nobody talks to him, and they run away from him like running away from the plague. He becomes lonely in public; it is worse than being in a prison. For him even seeing his wife is forbidden. He is sent to his father's home until he repents. This way, until he is reformed, he is pushed away from humanity. He retires to a private place and tries to mend his ways by worship, service, and education and only after that is he accepted back into the community. He will never let this happen a second time; the strength of his morals will show him the road to salvation. This poor person that you see here didn't get proper education and manners since he was sickly in his youth. He sinned because of that but he didn't have any misconduct within the last four years.

As I was listening to Sheikh Celal's words in awe, we arrived at the guesthouse. What strange practices! What will happen to poor old me?

When I entered my room, the servant handed me two letters and a newspaper. The letters were not in envelopes. On one side it said "To Mullah Abbas Effendi" and had a postal seal. On the other side was the writing. One of the letters was from Feride. Her father and brothers wanted to get to know me, and she was asking me when I could come to visit them. The address was "Vusul Isbilye square, the house of Osman Gazevi." The second letter was from the newspaper named Istikbal (The Future) that was being published in Darus'saadet. The manager was sending me a copy of the newspaper and asking me to write about the Russian Muslims, the people of Turkistan and

Bukhara to be published in the newspaper. Since they didn't have any knowledge on their religious brothers living there, any news would be appreciated. I started thinking as I read the letters, the papers did not look like our papers, apparently, they manufactured their own papers. Even though they were away from the whole world, they had newspapers. What were they writing? They also must have had the publishing houses. The letters had seals on them but no stamps; that meant that the postal delivery was free. What a surprise! Feride, who was the girl that I met on the road, wrote a letter to me. She has a father and brothers, and they all know about this! This especially is a big surprise! While I was thinking about these, Sheikh Celal came in. Previously he had been at the bazaar.

—Where were you sir?

—They brought fresh eggs to the bazaar. I bought a dozen and gave them to get chicks. The poor Sheikh must've been losing his mind.

—Sir, what are you talking about? How can they take out chicks out of eggs in the bazaar?

—Yes, son. If there are eggs, there is no need for hens. There was no doubt that the Sheikh was going crazy. I was scared. Sheikh Celal noticed it and smiled.

—Son, you are a good person but, no offense, you're very ignorant. You know about the Koran but you don't know the "Book of Deeds." If you knew a little bit about it, you wouldn't be surprised to hear that you can get chicks out of the eggs without the hens.

—For God's sake, Father, tell me! How can you have chicks without the hens? What kind of book is this "Book of Deeds"?

—Son, listen to me, the reason that chicks come out of the eggs is not because the hens sit on them. It is because of the moisture and the temperature that the hen creates by sitting on the eggs.

According to the grace of God, the effect of this temperature and moisture help produce the body of the bird inside. By combining this fact of nature with the experience, it is possible to have chicks without hens in special containers.

—Great God should forgive us! How is this possible?

—Yes, son. It is possible. Don't think of it as sin or evil. Holy deeds are the deeds according to the Koran.

—Dear father, what kind of book is this? I have never heard of it before.

—I know that you haven't heard of it. This book is found everywhere in the world. Wherever you go around the world, it can be read. The pages are so huge that each letter is as big as a mountain!

As he was saying these words, I was wondering whether he or I was the one going crazy.

—I still don't understand anything.

This "Book of Deeds" is found in everything that God created, it is the universe and nature. God created the universe and nature. God also created the order and the rules that govern the powers, the movement and the products of nature. The way water runs down; the way day and night follow each other; the fact that you cannot grow wheat from barley; the fact that you cannot grow anything in stone; the fact that men cannot fly like birds; the fact that you cannot keep a fish in a bird's nest; all of these and many more things, living or nonliving everything has to follow these rules of nature. God's grace! Some powers of nature and some states of things are hazardous for people, some of them are beneficial. Some powers of nature become a slave and servant of mankind. For example, wind, fire, water, etc. Being a human requires the knowledge to be aware of the dangers of nature and to use the beneficial side of nature. What I call the "Book of Deeds" is the science of nature, and it contains knowledge about the body and the content, the features and the effects of everything in nature. If these are known, human beings can reap benefits from their work and efforts; they can do every kind of work; they won't

be aimless like animals. Thanks to the science of nature, we can have chicks out of eggs in three days in our bazaars. We can keep our homes warm in the winter and cool in the summer without burning wood. This way we can lead a comfortable life and worship god. While you learned praying, good morals and law from the science of religion, you learn gardening, farming, animal husbandry, and life from the science of nature. These words might not mean anything to you but in time all these and more will be apparent.

I was so surprised at all of these; I didn't know what to say. I quickly showed the letters I received and told the Sheikh my ideas about them.

—Yes, son. There is no payment for postal service in our country. We make paper from the plants. The books are published and distributed to the public free of charge. Our women and girls can both read and write. The envelope hasn't been invented here, and there is no need for it since there is no thought in our minds that is against the order and morality, there is no reason to hide it in an envelope. The work and belief of Islam is out in the open, shame requires hiding. Saying this Sheikh Celal went to his room. I kept looking after him in admiration. Then I noticed the “Istikbal” newspaper that I mentioned. I started reading. The first article was called “Turkic People in Turkistan”¹²:

“... when the circumstances in the country and in the world were that way, during the time of the *Khudayar* Khan in Kokand, Muzafferuddin in Bukhara and Muhammed Bahadir Khan in Harezm, the land of Turkistan was forced to be under the rule of the Russian state.
(Translated from Arabic)

12 The appearance of fictionalized newspaper clippings within a serialized work of literary journalism is fascinating; the rhetoric of these articles aims directly at Gaspirali's readers and the historical tensions of his own time.

The education and the civilization levels of the people of Turkistan are relatively low. Somehow, they do have plenty of knowledge in the sciences of theology but they are unaware of any other sciences. This requires sufficient contemplation because at some time in Turkistan, education and literature were quite advanced. For example, during the time of Amir Timur and the time of his grandson Ulug Bey, Semerkant was among the first in terms of science, knowledge and industry among the Islamic countries. Following the fatwa “science and knowledge give honor even to the Sultans,” they paid great attention to science and knowledge. Even though the lameness of Timur didn’t hold him from conquering the world, if he was an ignorant man, he wouldn’t be able to rule half of the world. Ignorance and tactlessness do not go together with conquest and heroism.

Mullah Abbas, who came to Darürrahāt is from Turkistan, is a young man from Tashkent. He is educated in his own country and in Paris yet we are very happy to hear that he will receive further education and science in our country. He will be enlightened by the education and get familiar with Islamic and human studies. We think that his coming to our country is a strange coincidence and not a part of an evil or hostile plan.”

The statements that I translated from the Arabic newspaper show that the people of Darürrahāt are familiar with the situation in Turkistan as they do know the situation of other places as well. These strange Muslims know everything, but nobody knows about them!

I continued to read the said newspaper and was very amazed when I noticed some of the news:

“The engineer in Palestine Village assembled a machine which makes it possible to bring out water from a well that is 100 archines deep. This new machine works with air and therefore has no expense. Thanks to this product of expertise and skill, the dry areas at the foot of the mountain will turn into gardens and vineyards. Well done and thanks!

Our chemist, honorable Sayyid Cafer created a powder out of a newly discovered mineral and bones that turn the most arid and infertile soil into the most fruitful land. We have seen that with the power of this powder, it was possible to grow wheat in formerly unsuitable places.

A strange incident happened in the village called El-Misir. Eight-year-old Said Hasanoglu swallowed a piece of glass accidentally. Since it was impossible to get rid of it with medicine and it would be deadly to wait for it to pass, the doctor of the village immediately opened up his stomach, took out the piece of glass and sewed the wound. We think that from now on poor Said will be careful with the things he puts in his mouth.” (Translation)

Reading this news, I realized that the sciences of engineering, chemistry, architecture, and medicine are highly advanced in Darürrahat. So much so that if I told all of these in Turkistan, nobody would believe me. What a strange country! What enlightenment! Every day I saw new things that I had never seen before! If time and opportunity permit, I will get to see everything about them.

Their lifestyle was more advanced than the lifestyles of other Islamic countries and the often-praised Europeans; it seemed this way to me, as for you, you need to pay attention to what I wrote and think for yourselves.

As I said before I had to accept the invitation of Feride Hanim. I wrote an answer back saying that I would happily be accepting her invitation. I wrote this in Arabic. Even though I studied Arabic for fifteen years, I was still afraid of making mistakes. In Turkistan, it would have been difficult to run into somebody who could question my qualifications and find my mistakes but here, knowing that my being a Mullah wouldn't mean anything for them, I was uncomfortable. How could I not be; even the women in this country were skilled in science and knowledge.

The day after I answered Feride Hanim's letter, her brother Sayyid Hasan came to the Caravanserai and then accompanied me to his house. The road that we walked was very orderly and nice just like the other roads in Darus-saadet. Stone pavements on both sides, iron fences and beautiful houses with rose gardens behind the fence all demonstrated the comfort and the taste of the people here. We arrived at the square at the end of this road. It was surrounded by gardens and houses on all four sides. The square was decorated with black and white stones, and in the middle of it stood a not so big but highly ornamented mosque. As we came closer to this mosque, I was getting more and more fascinated. What a strange building, what a pleasant shape, what mastery! The minaret was very narrow and the flower designs engraved on it were wonderfully unique. The mosque and the minarets were made out of white marble and the courtyard was built on black marble columns. As I looked at the view, I was feeling a deep admiration. The engravings on the big stones demonstrated grace and simplicity and it was impossible not to be in awe! The master who built this mosque didn't build only a building but declared Islam. It was as simple as it was divine! The whole and the parts were built with such an expertise that it was impossible to see a cut or a break. It was as if the whole mosque and the minarets were cut from a solid single stone! I said, "well done". The Arabs of Darürrahat were more masterful than their Andalusian ancestors. They didn't waste any time. For five hundred years, they advanced quickly and gradually in science and skills.

Since there were no graves or shrines near the mosque, and I hadn't seen any cemeteries around Darürrahat, I remembered that, in Turkistan, the mosques were always surrounded by graveyards, and I asked Sayyid Hasan where the cemetery was.

The cemeteries are located far away from the city and the villages. We don't bury our dead in the city or the villages.

—How strange! Is this a difficulty for the public here?

—Why should it be, sir. Absolutely no problem because burying the dead in areas where people live is very hazardous to public health. While they are rotting, the corpses create gases and poison that makes the soil and the water contaminated. If you research medicine and health sciences, you will understand, sir.

—The majority of this land is highly experienced and knowledgeable.

—By the grace of God! Is it true, Sayyid Abbas, that the lands of Turkistan, Iran, Arabia, and Maghreb are very backward in terms of their life standards?

—Yes, sir. As far as I know those places are in savage condition compared to Darürrahat.

—May God help them; our ancestors were very advanced. Ignorance and tactlessness belonged to Europe back then. And now Europeans have passed Muslims in life standards. It is such a surprise to see the Muslims in this situation.

—Yes, sir, nowadays Europe has all the industry, trade, fortune, and power.

—We are aware of the fact that they rule the world, however they also lack manners and civilization. The body of Europe is not as healthy as they think.

We passed the square and continued on the road named Mudarris's. This road was also as beautiful and graceful as the others. The house of Feride Hanım's father was on this road. Just like the other houses, it was inside a garden. On the roadside there were rose gardens and a bronze fence.

Sayyid Hasan took me to the guest section of the house. As we passed the courtyard, I admired the neatness and cleanliness of these Muslims. Everything had a beauty and utility. For example, what is a flower? We don't think of it as necessary; but look at what these people do with flowers: they planted many roses of different kind around the house. Throughout the year they bloom one after the other and fill the air with their beauty and sweet odors. The gardens are full of birds and

nightingales. Hunting or catching birds are not practiced. The birds are used to people as if they are raised by hand. It is as if they are thinking and invoking God through their songs.

When we entered the room, Feride's father Sheikh Abdullah and his second son Sayyid Ali greeted me and showed me a place to sit. The room was decorated with a beautiful straw mat and red leather sofas and cushions. The Sheikh was eighty years old, gray-haired and bearded, but he looked healthy and strong. His son Ali was three years younger than his brother Hassan. He was around twenty-five years old. They expressed their happiness for my visit and asked me questions about the situation in Turkistan. After talking a while, I realized that Sheikh Abdullah knew more about Turkistan and Europe than I.

I was surprised when he mentioned the life and deeds of Amir Nasrullah Buhari and what happened to Kokand's sultan Khudayar Khan in a very detailed way, because much of it was not known to Kokand. The strangest thing that the Sheikh said was that it was known that Turkistan and the countries of Kokand were going to be invaded by Russia one hundred years before it actually happened. When I asked him how it was possible to know something that would happen in one hundred years, he said:

—If you go to the city library and look at Ibn Marwan's book called "Comparative Possibilities of Politics", you will see that what he said one hundred years ago exactly happened later.

—I am in awe of this man's clairvoyance and the strength of his knowledge. Can human beings see one hundred years into the future? I can't comprehend it! No matter how I look at it, I can see that Ibn Marwan must have had a vision.

—No, son. Ibn Marwan didn't have a vision. He was a normal person like us. Even you can see things that will happen, but this requires education, broad cognition, and foresight.

Even though the Sheikh described all of these, my cognition and foresight weren't enough to comprehend them. How could I know things that will happen in five or fifty years from now? Pitying my shame and lack of understanding the Sheikh continued to explain:

—Son, do you have any information on Alexander the Great from the Omayyad dynasty's times and the hero of Turkistan Timur the Lame? If you do, how did you find out about them? You weren't alive in their time. Yes, you learned them from the report and the history and poetry books from those times. Since it is possible to know about things that happened before us, don't doubt the fact that it is possible to know things that will happen after us. You know what a watermill is. If water comes, it starts to work and turn. If there is no water it stops moving, right? With this knowledge, we can understand any watermill, why and how it was built, the waterways, the abundance or lack of water, when and how it will move. Just like this, if we know the economy, politics, history, and literature of one tribe, nation, or a state, we can compare and contrast it with the neighboring countries or states and make a judgment about whether that country will advance or decline in the future. Comparing and examining examples are great tools of science. If you have knowledge, information and experience, your eyes will start seeing the future.

Yes, sir. Understanding comes. But there is something I can't understand. Whatever happened and will happen is only God's will: Sometimes something happens in the morning and you can't comprehend it at night when you put your head down.

—Yes, son. Everything depends on God's wishes; the will belongs to God, he is the one, in this respect I believe the same. However, there are some situations that you don't pay attention and don't understand, that's why you are not convinced by my words. Whatever happens in the universe and in the world of human beings happens for a reason, according to a rule. If the reasons and the rules are the same and one, the incident and the results will be one. This is one state of the great

God's grace. Pay attention, for thousands of years the sun has risen from the east and gone down in the west. Is there any doubt that, if God wills, he can make the sun move in forty directions? Still, depending on the comparison, it is reasonable to think that the sun will rise from the east again. This is not a mistake or being rebellious because we are not denying the fact that if God wants, he can make the sun rise from the west. Just as in nature, there are rules and regulations in human life whose effects and results cannot be denied because they continue to exist from the ancient times until today. The person who knows these rules and regulations can use his intelligence and strength for comparison to decide on whether a country is on the way to progress or decline. I will give you an obvious example: You stayed in the French country. You know their conditions. During the 1870 war, Austrians took over the cities of Alsace-Lorraine and left the public and the government sad but even the Austrians who were victorious were grieved to keep these said cities. These two countries have been fighting for years to keep or to take back these cities. Their public all became soldiers. All of their money, their fortune went to the soldiers and war. That is why there is no doubt that there will always be a war between them. If we also know about the situation of the great states other than these two, it would be possible to give the year of the war that will happen. Yes, there might be some mistakes but it would be a very close estimation.

As you see, son, someone with education and knowledge, using intelligence, comparison and logic can guess things that will happen or are likely to happen before they happen. Ibn Marwan wasn't a miracle worker but someone with intelligence and knowledge. To foresee that the Turkistan countries that are behind in terms of progress and fighting with each other will be under the rule of Russia does not require a big science.

As I was thinking about these words, Feride Hanim came inside the room and put some food in front of us. There were big glasses full of milk and some sweets. Feride Hanim looked at me:

—Welcome, sir. Thank you for visiting my father's house.

Since I didn't think she would come and talk to me, I didn't know what to say. I somehow managed to say a couple of words.

—Please, enjoy these, sir, we don't have tea or coffee in our country.

—Thank you. Your country and the circumstances are so nice and beautiful that I don't mind not having tea or coffee. What you are offering here is better than any tea. Feride Hanim was not dressed the way I saw her before. Her outfit was beautiful and she looked like a fairy. This way she looked and sounded more beautiful and sweeter than before. Feride Hanim turned to her brothers:

—When we ran into him at Alhambra Palace, Sayyid Abbas was very frightened. We, on the other hand, were worse than him! If Sheikh Celal hadn't been there, he would have thought us genies and fairies.

—Yes, I was extremely shocked. Who would have thought that I would run into Muslim girls in the Alhambra Palace! I am still very much in shock and can't believe my eyes. But when I look at you, I feel comforted.

—You are so kind, now that you realize no harm will come to you, you are feeling more comfortable.

—Yes, that makes me very happy. When I get education in this honorable and highly civilized country and go back to Turkistan to talk about it, it will be impossible to keep you out of my mind.

—Hopefully son, you do have a good opinion of us. Maybe after staying with us for a while and getting used to the lifestyle here, you will forget the idea of going back to your country.

Even though Sheikh Abdullah said these words in a friendly manner, they hurt me like he threw stones at me. When I thought about the idea of staying among these mountains, my heart ached. I tried to hide this sentiment and said:

—I have been around many countries; I have never seen a more beautiful place. I have met many people but I have never seen more civilized, skillful people than the Muslims of this country. I would like to make the country mine but everybody is in love with the land that they were born in. That's why I think about going back to Turkistan and also visiting Egypt and Istanbul. But we will see.

—It is your wish and your idea, of course. However, since there is no relationship or communication between our country and other countries, your going back to your country is up to God. Some leaders and scholars among us are sent to other countries but they do not reveal our secret. They only gather information on other people and countries and come back. Nobody goes away to stay away: there is no way. If there is a way, it is only known by a couple of special officials.

I realized then that I was here to stay. I was both a slave and a free man; I should lose all hope for Tashkent and Istanbul. What else was going to happen to me? Hiding my feelings, I said:

—I would gladly stay in this country; I will get used to the rules and ways here hopefully.

As a response to what I said, Sheikh Abdullah and his sons told me that the public and the Amir would pay attention to my well-being and comfort. After talking for a while, it was understood that Sheikh Abdullah was a teacher of history and philosophy at the Madrasah for young adults, Sayyid Hasan was an engineer, Sayyid Ali was a teacher of agriculture, and Feride Hanim was a doctor.

Earlier, Feride had told the history of Darürrahat. At this time, her father explained many things and news about this country:

A small community made out of one of Granada's brave men, Sayyid Musa's friends and family ran away from the Spanish tyranny by migrating using the before mentioned underground road. They arrived at the square surrounded by the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Since they were able to escape the tyranny, they named this area "Darürrahat". The area was covered with mud and swamps because of the water coming down from the mountains. The poor immigrants couldn't go any further and dug some areas next to the mountains and put up some tents. After that they closed the underground road and started building their new country. The total number of the immigrants was one hundred eighty-five, and seventy-eight of them were women. This Islamic community selected Sayyid Musa's relative Sayyid Yakup as their temporary leader and formed an assembly of six out of old and knowledgeable members. Since all of the immigrants were educated skillful people, and they had brought as many tools and necessities as they could carry, they had everything they needed to start a life. Following late Sayyid Musa's counsel, the gardener of Alhambra Palace brought forty sheep and many chickens through the underground tunnel.

This way, the immigrants built two villages on the side of the mountain but because of the swamps in the area, the air was foul and the people were affected by malaria. In a short time, several men passed away and many of them were left weak and sickly. The wise men and the leaders got together to remedy this situation. They started growing wheat, cotton, and fruits under dry and high places. Following the orders of the doctors and engineers, everybody started working. Old and young, everyone had a job and only the very frail ones stayed at home and cooked. They knew that they had to dry up the swamp, that's why they dug up channels and directed the waters coming from the mountains to the gardens and orchards. The engineer who was overseeing these jobs, Sayyid Ahmet, calculated the water running down and then estimated the amount of water to evaporate. After that he decided that

the water must have a route to follow, otherwise the whole area would have turned into a lake in a short time. With this discovery, he went around Darürrahat and found a tunnel that was blocked by trees, soil and big rocks that fell from high places on the side of the mountain. He gathered everybody together and told them to open up this waterway. In a couple of days, after the tunnel was open, all the water welling up in swampy area started to go down, the area dried up, and became very fertile. As soon as the marshes dried, the air cleared up and all the diseases afflicting the people started to disappear. By discovering this tunnel with his intelligence, the engineer Sayyid Ahmet saved the whole country from a lot of trouble and maybe from decline. In a very short time, this strange community of Muslims became a happy, comfortable community ready for steady progress. They named the first village they built in Darürrahat New Granada. This village still exists and is located on the north side. The first mosque, madrasah, and clinic were all built in this village and they were instrumental in the worship, morality, education, and health of the community. Everyone here realized that they could gain so much in this world by having science, skills, knowledge, and industry, and by showing perseverance and effort. That's why boys and girls, old and young, everyone decided to read and learn, find jobs and work. Everyone studied sciences and practiced their skills so that there was no one that could be called ignorant or lazy. They made sure that the community thrived by growing fruits, vegetables, and wheat, and breeding sheep and fowl. This way, thirty years after their migration, the population reached four hundred and they were divided into three villages. In one of them there was the "wise men's house" where once a week the wise men and the elders assembled to talk about science, skills and industrial experiences. Special clerks would write down the discussions, lessons, and experiences and turn them into books. After one hundred years of their migration, the population was so high that the whole country was full of villages and they started to build the city of Daru's-Saadet.

The community developed all the science and skills that were known by the Andalusian Muslims. Since they were all intelligent, hard-working, and skillful, they were also prosperous, ethical, honorable people. The wealth, security, purity, taste, and enjoyment seen in Darürrahat cannot be found in ordinary people. They don't know about vanity, jealousy, adultery, selfishness, tyranny, hunger, and poverty. They built their lives around the saying that "education and seeking pleasure is everybody's duty" and they were graced with never-before-seen comfort and unimaginable happiness.

When I came to Darürrahat, the whole population was three hundred thousand and there were forty big villages and the city. The Amirs coming from the bloodline of Sayyid Musa governed the country in a logical and fair way. The respect and effort they showed toward knowledge, science, and hard work were exemplary. To show their appreciation and respect for the Amirs, the community got together to build a big palace and a Qasr for them to live in. They named the Palace Qasr Al-Zahra after the name of the old mother of the reigning Amir.

According to Sheikh Abdullah's story, Sultan Zahra was not an ordinary woman. She was the poet of a divan, a writer of philosophy, a woman with high morality. Using her influence and determination, she was able to get two schools for girls built. These schools educated girls to be talented teachers, skillful homemakers, and good wives with manners, grace, and education.

Till the evening I listened to Sheikh Abdullah's account of the history of the country and Sayyid Hasan and Ali's stories, but I couldn't keep myself from wondering one thing: why didn't Feride Hanim shy away from me? I was a stranger to her. They were Muslims. As the sun went down, Feride Hanim came into the room and invited all of us to dinner. The table was set in the garden. When we got there, I saw the wife of Sheikh Abdullah, Ayse Hanim. She called me "son" and showed me

affection. She was a very respectable old lady. Strangely, these people all felt like old friends to me. It must have been because of their niceness.

We ate meat, dough, and milk at Sheikh Abdullah's table. Afterwards we had dessert, candies, and drinks made with fruits. I filled my stomach with these delicious foods and filled my senses with the beauty of the garden. Listening to the pleasant conversation of these people, I forgot my own situation. Feride Hanim brought a musical instrument that resembled a saz and started playing and singing with a kind, sweet voice. I was extremely comforted, happy, and full of admiration. What a life! The father was an educator, the two sons were teachers, the daughter was a doctor and a nightingale in the shape of a human. What grace, what kindness, what pleasure! What happy people!

The songs and poems that Feride Hanim sang and recited were the songs and marches that Andalusian Arabs were singing as they were going to war. Listening to them brought tears to my eyes. I was so happy; everything was sweet and delicious. Seeing that I was enjoying the music and songs by Feride Hanim, Sheikh Abdullah said:

—Music must be much respected in Turkistan. I see that you're having great pleasure.

—No sir, just the opposite. Singing and playing instruments are considered low and debased.

—What a strange idea! Music should never be used for immorality and baseness, because music is the translator of the soul. It is the appearance of acceptance and happiness.

The happiness of the creation is rightful in the eyes of God; cultivated music and poetry praising God with pure love direct people to believe and worship, not to rebelliousness. All work and education are sacred; only how they are used is important. As scholarship expands your mind, cultivated music expands your heart and sentiments, educates the heart and the sentiments, and makes people soft and temperate. A Kadi can help the happiness and prosperity of the people with his education

of law, but he can also destroy the community if he abuses his powers. A seasoned chemist can find solutions to diseases by making medicine or he can make poison to demolish the people. That's why we can't abandon the study of law and chemistry. Similarly, one should never think of music as contrary to the culture of Islam. It is obvious that there are many differences between Turkistan and Darürrahat.

After spending my time with lovely conversation and delicious melodies, I didn't notice that it was the evening. I said goodbye to these interesting people and headed back to the Caravanserai. They made me promise to visit them whenever I need anything or want to see them. Feride Hanım gave me a gift of a basket and a set of clothes. I thought about not accepting it because I didn't have anything to give in return but I decided not to break their hearts and took them with many thanks. Sayyid Ali took me all the way to the Caravanserai. One more thing surprised me in Sheikh Abdullah's house. There were no slaves or servants but there was also no need for them in their order and lifestyle. There are so much skill and easiness in their endeavors that one person can accomplish the job of 10 people.

Back in the hotel, Sheikh Celal was waiting for me. He told me that we would visit the honorable Amir the next day. He wanted to meet the man from Turkistan.

—When will we go to the Amir's palace?

—The day after tomorrow, in the morning. I think a man from the Palace will come and take us.

—What are the customs and formalities? I don't want to be embarrassed when I appear in front of him.

—There are no formalities. However, you need to answer everything he asks.

—If I have a request from him, will it be possible to say it?

—Yes, it will be possible but what will you request? Whatever you need will be given to you. They appointed a farm and a garden for you. You will receive education and then you can find a wife and be happy. What else are you going to request?

These words might have pleased a lot of men but they were too heavy for me. I realized that I would never be able to get out of Darürrahat and see my country. I was extremely sad. My only hope was talking to the Amir. Maybe he would accept my request and give me permission to go anytime I wanted. Sheikh Celal didn't fail to notice my sadness:

—Tell me son, what are you going to request?

—Permission to get out of Darürrahat.

—Is that so? That's a tough situation! I don't know what the Amir will say. However, there has been nobody outside Darürrahat coming in and out of the country. You'll be the first one if he accepts it. I don't know, son.

—Why don't you know? I didn't come here with the stipulation of staying in Darürrahat. I am not a slave; I am a free Muslim, why can't I go?

—I am not saying that you are a slave. Don't you like our country? We were all going to make you happy and comfortable.

—Many thanks for that. I am very pleased with everyone here. I have never seen a place like Darürrahat and nice people like the ones here. If I stay here, I might be very happy but I need to go. My intention was to go on a pilgrimage. I can't abandon this intention. I have to do it.

After these words, the Sheikh started contemplating. Even though he couldn't deny my right to go back to my country, he was definitely thinking about the fact that my leaving would reveal the situation of Darürrahat to the rest of the world. After a long silence he said:

—God knows best, son. You need to be patient. Maybe with time and thinking, a solution will be found. In a day we will go to see the Amir, you can explain your case. However, I wouldn't expect a positive answer. If I was the Amir, I wouldn't be able to say yes; if I refused you, you would lose your right, if I accept you then the secret of Darürrahat would be revealed. The Spaniards would join us here and our lifestyle

and civilization would be all mixed up. They wouldn't be doing the same cruelty and tyranny that their fathers practiced on the Muslims of Granada and Andalusia to us, but you never know.

When Sheikh Celal left, I started thinking about myself. What was going to happen to me? I wondered if they would do any harm to me now that they knew about my intention of leaving. Maybe they would kill me. But, no, they wouldn't, hopefully. They were very mild and conscientious people; but what would they do? I was losing my mind.

The next morning, Sheikh Celal and an officer from the palace came and told me that the honorable Amir was expecting me. Since I was expecting this, I told them I was ready. The three of us took to the road. I wrote earlier that there were no horses or horse drawn carriages in this country. There was no need for horses or mules. The services of horses and mules were done by water and electricity. We passed the bazaar and the squares and arrived at one side of the city. We were in front of a beautiful forest that was cultivated like a garden. We entered the garden through a large yellow ornamented metal gate. On either side there were rose gardens and date trees; the road we walked on was made of yellow sand that glittered like gold. In front of us, the palace looked white and clean, like a maiden who had just washed herself in the sea. The palace's name was Qasr Al-Zahra. Right across from the Sultan's gate, there was a fountain made out of red marble. Looking around the palace with awe, I failed to see the ornamented engravings on the walls. But when I came closer and paid attention, I admired the tools that carved these rocks and the masters that made them! It would be impossible to put these details on paper. All the fortresses of Qasr Al-Zahra were covered with these engravings.

After walking up the marble steps, we came to the door of the palace. The door opened and we went in. The guards took us to a room on the first floor. They brought various kinds of food and drinks. The room was decorated with golden silk

cloth. The officer who brought us from the Caravanseraï came half an hour later to take us to the Amir. Through a bronze and crystal decorated staircase we went up to the second floor, into a large domed room. Oh my God! What kind of palace was this? It was covered with a crystal dome. The columns holding the dome were decorated with marble, gold, and silver painted engravings. Everything was done in such a masterful and tasteful manner that I was out of words to describe them. As I was admiring the view, my heart felt light.

When I took a couple of steps and reached the middle of the room, I saw something like a big pulpit, the height and the width of which was around seven or eight hand spans. The top of this pulpit looked like glass and the feet were marble and bronze. The pulpit was actually a mirror. When I took a peek, I almost lost my mind. All of the villages, gardens, and people everywhere were seen in the mirror. The people's walking and working were reflected exactly on the mirror. Sheikh Celal saw my surprise:

—Son, don't be surprised. This is not magic or something impossible; you know mirrors and telescopes. There is a high tower in the palace where you can see all sides of the country. Through strategically located mirrors and telescopes, the picture of the whole country passes through the glass dome and is reflected on this pulpit. The honorable Amir can view the whole country without leaving the palace. It is not magic, son; it is only skill and ingenuity.

—By God! The knowledge and science of these Muslims are at this level! Everything I know is almost nothing in comparison. I am full of astonishment. In front of this mirror there was a valuable divan and three seats on the left side. They were made out of redwood and covered with silk material. As I was enjoying the lavish view, I didn't notice that a second door opened and the Amir came inside. I realized that he was the Amir because of Sheikh Celal's respectful salute. I also saluted him respectfully and took a couple of steps back. The

Amir was about thirty years old. He had a green turban and the long, white attire. He was a handsome, nice-looking, gray bearded man.

The leader of the most civilized, most skillful, most comfortable, and happiest people was in front of me. There was nothing to fear in his look or attire. On the contrary he was a sweet, encouraging, and nice person. As I looked at his face, I felt more and more comfortable. The Amir was not one of the destructive, murderous Amirs. Even though I was young; I still knew the late Amir of Kokand, Khudayar Khan. I had seen him several times. You couldn't look at his face without fear. However, this Amir was not scary at all. Yet with an unknown power, he demanded respect. I was encouraged by his soft, sweet look. He acknowledged our salutations, sat on the divan, and showed us the seats. Sheikh Celal came and sat next to me. Since I was getting used to him, this also comforted me.

The honorable Amir started talking and asked me questions about the state of business in Turkistan and Bukhara, what happened to Khudayar Khan, about the sons of Atalik Gazi Yakup Khan and about the governing style of the Amir of Bukhara, Abdūlahad Khan. I answered his questions as best as I could. After that he mentioned Bukhara's infamous disease called "string worm". He explained that it was because of the contaminated water and added that he was surprised that they didn't bring water from afar through tunnels. When he asked the question about "sodomy", I answered that this immoral behavior was not seen nowadays. He was very relieved and thanked God for this. However, his question embarrassed me so much that I wanted to disappear from the face of the earth. I sweated bullets because of the shame of my country.

—Do they want to learn trades and skills from Russians and Europeans in Turkistan?

—No, sir. Because in science, knowledge, and talent, we consider ourselves the best.

—Shame, shame! Everybody wants to be the first but not knowing the world and being clueless about situations are the reasons for decline. He turned to Sheikh Celal: “The situation in China is a big lesson. This tribe considered themselves the only human beings, they thought they only had science and talent and despised the other people as low and wild. They didn’t want to have relationships with any other countries and look what happened to them? They all remained childish. It is obvious that the state of four hundred million people is not as powerful and influential as the Belgian government with the handful of people. Four hundred million Chinese people are like four hundred million children.

Sheikh Celal said, “yes, sir” and nodded. The honorable Amir continued to talk to me:

—Our prophet told us that it was necessary to go find science wherever we can find it and get educated. And Prophet Ali said that studying every type of knowledge and skill was very special to Islam. However, the majority of the Muslims abandon this high rule, only some of the sciences and skills survived. There is a time and a place for each science and skill and the Muslims are behind in many cases.

The despondency seen in this century, the deficiencies of politics, trade, and profit of Muslims compared to Europeans are all results of this. If the people of Turkistan won’t open their eyes, get rid of their heedlessness, and try to learn what did they do not know, slowly they will lose their fortunes, money, and trade to knowledgeable and educated people. This means total destruction for them. If a person cannot do a job and his job and trade are not accepted in the world, what will that person do? It is the same for a state. After that, he turned to me and said, “Mullah Abbas, you will be comfortable in our country. You won’t see any sorrow, sadness or anxiety here.”

—No doubt, sir, but I would like to leave all these and Darürrahat. I humbly request your permission to do so.

—For certain reasons, there is no way out of our country.

—I realize that, sir. However, I didn't come here with the stipulation that I stay, and I intend to go on a pilgrimage. I request your leave.

—Your request is a very important issue. I will discuss this with the assembly and give you an answer. He said these and stood up. Understanding that it was time to leave, we bowed and backed out of the room.

When we were out of this room, the officials came and invited us to eat. They also mentioned that we had permission to view the Palace and the gardens. However, I was preoccupied with the decision that the assembly would make about me. I wondered if they were going to let me go.

After eating we went to the library and the assembly room. If there was an important affair in the country, one wise man or alderman from each village would be invited by the Amir and they would convene in this assembly Hall. We also looked at the rose and fruit gardens of the Palace and had a good time. In the afternoon we went back to the Caravanserai.

When I asked Sheikh Celal about what he thought regarding my request, he said:

—I don't know, son. Be patient and you will find out. Even if the answer is negative, don't worry. We will make you comfortable. I am surprised to see that you are worrying so much about Turkistan and Europe.

I couldn't get the necessary consolation from the Sheikh and went to Sheikh Abdullah's house to enjoy myself and feel better. Even though I wanted to see Hassan and Ali, what I really desired was to be in the company of Feride Hanim. I was accepted with respect and I spent a wonderful evening. During our conversations, I found out many more strange things about the customs and traditions of Darürrahat.

The Amir had a wife call Hatice Banu. She was getting involved in everything including the public management. The education and law related to women were under her protection and control.

The schools for girls were not fewer or lower than the schools for boys. The sciences and knowledge they received were not limited to information about womanhood, they learned pedagogy, medicine, and law. They even had their hands in the justice system. Isn't that astonishing! They had women Kadis; black-eyed, fair-faced, long-haired, beautiful Kadis, Kadis without beards and mustaches! However, these Kadis were attending cases between or related to women. If the case of asabe , divorce, and some other disputes between husband and wife were handled by regular Kadis, the sentence and the verdict would be sent to female Kadis for appeal so that there were no violations of rights. The work of the female Kadis were observed by an assembly of wise women chaired by Hatice Banu. In Darürrahat the justice system for men and women was built on fairness and compassion. The Muslim women of Darürrahat were not considered animals with the ability to speak like the Turkistan women. They were not tools of immorality like the women in Europe. They were neither like the Asian and eastern concubines nor like the European toys. There was no place in Darürrahat for the Eastern concubines or European prostitutes. Since Darürrahat was a real Muslim country there were no divisions between people. They could only be separated from each other by their upbringing and education. In this country, kindness was considered your biggest capital, and mercy was the biggest talent. This way men and women were considered two separate classes and they built their lives around complementing and improving each other. Their relationship was built on conditions and contracts. Women could not be sold as property; they could not be given to husbands as a slave. Men and women were both free from force, violence and cruelty. They spent their lives with mutual affection, friendship, and justice.

In all of these things, there was something that I admired: in the wedding contract, they documented the jobs that the women would do, the amount of money she would add into the family's fortune and how much she would gain in interest.

Moreover, the wife had a share in the money that the husband made before the wedding date. The Muslim women of Darürrahat had their rights not only in words but also in deeds. This was something unheard of in Turkistan and could not be seen even in Europe.

When they mentioned another thing, I was completely shocked: before the marriage the man and the woman had to tell their ages and bring documents showing that they did not have any disabilities or illnesses that would affect their offspring. They would not marry an old man with a young girl: This was not a place for the rich men of Tashkent and the Alphonse of France!

All the people I saw in this country were happy, healthy people because of these strange customs. Their ethics and the power of their spirituality could not be found anywhere in the world.

—Tell me for God's sake; is there no treachery between husband and wife?

—No, there isn't because it cannot be. We don't have the forcefulness of the East and the immorality of the West.

—Alright, but what happens if a girl marries for love and affection and the love disappears and turns to hatred. This opens the road to disloyalty.

—No, there is no day passed without affection and you cannot force affection. That's why, if the affection is over, we apply the fairness clause. If you cannot keep a servant by force, how can you keep a woman by force? When the fire of affection dies down, the wife requests separation and explains her case. We don't have anybody foolish enough to demand love by force in our country. For these reasons, nobody chooses the road to disloyalty. You, Mullah Abbas, are curious about this situation, pay attention to two examples: everywhere in the world women are faced with a little bit of unfairness and a lot of tyranny. As a result of this, there is sodomy in Bukhara and prostitution in England. London is one of the biggest cities of

the world, but why is it that there are one hundred thousand registered prostitutes in that city? Is there any doubt that this is because of the lack of civilization and morality?

For a couple of evenings, I visited Sheikh Abdullah's house and had great time there. The stories he told about Darürrahat and the company of Feride was making the time pass so sweetly. One evening, the topic came to the last will of the late Sayyid Musa, the famous commander of Andalusia, I wrote earlier that he left a will to his friends and relatives who immigrated to Darürrahat after escaping Spanish tyranny. His will was protected by the seals of the forty imams of the country. He wanted it to be opened in the year 1500 (2075).

—I wonder what is in this will, I said.

—It is not known. When the time comes, people who come after us will read and find out.

—Yes, sir. In time it will be known; however, is it not possible to guess what it says by using analogy and foresight?

—Maybe son, but trying to guess the will doesn't seem consistent with the conditions of the will.

—I am sorry, sir. My intention is to find out the ideas of the Darürrahat people about this aforementioned will because it seems impossible not to think about this will that is going to be opened and read in seven hundred years.

—Yes, people have ideas. If you are very curious about it, I can give you some information.

I was all ears when I heard these words. I prepared myself to listen.

—It is obvious that the will doesn't contain topics such as the division of goods or villages. It is possibly about the situations of people. I said, "Yes, it must be" as if I had read the will.

—What can be said about people seven hundred years beforehand? It is impossible to know; but it must be such an item in the will that when the will was written, it was unnecessary, and it will be necessary in the year 1500. If the will was related only to the conditions and lifestyles of our country, there

wouldn't be a need to read it in seven hundred years. According to this, it is guessed that the will mentions other countries and people and our future relationships with them. If you ask "why is it thought this way?" listen. Everything in our country is calculated and registered. Since we do not have plagues or wars, our population is increasing every year. In two hundred years, the population will not fit into this country and there will be problems about administration. This will be in the year 1500, that is why it is thought that the will is about this situation; but maybe it is not, only God knows. You are wondering, "How could Sayyid Musa know and write this will about the situation that will happen seven hundred years after him?" It is difficult to answer this question but you can deduce that people who are aware of biology, politics, and lifestyles can foresee events that will happen and people with effective, sharp intellect can foresee even better.

—Very good, father Sheikh, I accept that. I wonder what people think about it? What is your opinion? Laughing at my foolish question and pitying my curiosity, the Sheikh said, "I will tell you but remember my words are only guesses and opinions."

While I was listening to the Sheikh very intently, a bell hanging on the wall started ringing. It was ringing with electricity. We listened. A voice came from the apparatus on the wall: "Is Mullah Abbas from Turkistan there?" The Sheikh answered, "Yes, sir." The voice said, "The request of Mullah Abbas was discussed in the Grand Assembly and it was rejected because of the damage it might cause to our country." I froze when I heard the news from the telephone and gathered all my strength to say; "I can't give up the idea of going back to my country. What is my guilt? Why are you keeping me here as a captive? I am a free Muslim; I intend to go on the pilgrimage, and your decision about me is violent and tyrannical." Just like there was telegram between cities, they had telephones to talk

to each home. What a civilized people, what strange people! In five to ten minutes there was a voice again saying, "Your wish has been registered. Do not be afraid of harm or damage."

I was extremely upset about this curious message. What was the decision? What was going to happen to me? What was the harm they were talking about? My head felt as if there were ten horses running in it. Seeing my sad situation, Sheikh Abdullah and his sons tried to console me and told me that I would be given a permission to leave Darürrahat. I said goodbye to these compassionate people and went back to the Caravan-serai. I couldn't sleep all night. All kinds of ideas, fears and nightmares were filling my head. As I was sitting at the breakfast table, half sick, half awake, my guide Sheikh Celal walked in. He saw that I was waiting for an answer with all my being.

—Son, the assembly gave permission for you to leave. No one can force anybody to do anything without their will. You were a guest before, now you are more of the guest.

—I thank the Amir and the Grand Assembly a thousand times. No one will be harmed about my leaving. No one will know about you and your situation here.

—Whatever is appropriate for you, you can act that way. The permission is given without any conditions.

—Without conditions? What does this mean? Is it okay if I expose Darürrahat to Spain or France?

—If you want to, you can.

—If I do, won't the Europeans come and invade your country?

—Maybe. Only God will know.

—But I will not expose you. A fish will talk more than I will.

—The Grand Assembly considered all of these when they granted you the permission. You can act any way you like after you leave Darürrahat. We didn't give you any stipulations while you were here it wouldn't be right to do so after you leave.

—When will they take me out?

—I don't know son, but you can't stay with us long. You need to take advantage of your days here and pay attention to see the things you haven't seen in our country yet.

Since I didn't comprehend the strange decision of the strange Grand Assembly of the strange country, I let myself be guided by God. Sheikh Celal and I went to visit the grand school. It was in a garden on the side of the city. We came to a building like the Sultan's palace; it was the Madrasah. It was the Palace of science and skills. There were three classes in the madrasah, one of them was the science of religion and philosophy, the other one was the science of arithmetic and wisdom, and the last was for political science and administration.

We went into the first classroom. The teacher was teaching about hidden things.

After that we went into the political science classroom. Another teacher was telling very interesting things about the Europeans and Europe. I tried to understand the lesson.

After the honorable teacher completed his lesson, I realized that all I have known up till now was like an island in an ocean. All the information and knowledge I received in Paris was mixed up in my head confusing me. I tried to get my head together and focused on a couple of ideas that I learned about Europe.

When we came back to the Caravanserai it was afternoon. An officer sent by the Kadi was waiting for me. As soon as he saw me, he greeted me and said, "Sir, pick up your belongings, we are leaving."

I gathered my things including the European outfit that I had bought in Paris. It was obvious that I was leaving Darür-rahāt. At that moment, Sheikh Celal gave me a hug and said, "Son, God may protect you, I might not see you again. You will go before the Kadi. Whatever happens to you, don't be worried or afraid, no harm will come to you; the future will be fine. However, leaving our country is more difficult than coming in."

I left with the officer of the Kadi. The people in the Caravanserai walked with me to the bazaar, however they were looking at me with much worry and curiosity. This made me fear about the uncertainty of my situation but what good would fear do?

Like a drunken man with his eyes closed, I walked all the way to the courthouse with the officers. We entered the big room. After that, the Kadi came in and told me to take off my clothes and put on the outfit I had brought from Turkistan and Europe. I went behind the curtain and changed. The officer checked my pockets and retrieved everything related to Darür-rahah. They took away the gifts from Feride and the outfits given by the government. Thus, we went into a second and a third room. Without saying anything, they closed the door. It was in complete darkness like a dungeon. It was the evening but even if it were the daytime, it wouldn't have made any difference for me because there was no window in the room. I realized that I was put in prison. How did this happen? They were going to let me go, why did they put me in here? If they weren't going to let me go, what was the use of prison? The whole country was a kind of prison for me.

However, it was a pleasant and comfortable prison.

A long time passed this way. I didn't know how much. I didn't know if it was the day or night. The guard kept bringing food at intervals. Even though I asked many questions, I couldn't get any answers from him. I couldn't find any solution to the darkness of my situation. My head was hurting from thinking too much and I decided to leave it all to God. When the door opened the next time, a woman came in with the guard. When the guard left, I saw that it was Feride. She greeted me with her sweet and delicious voice and sat across from me. I was so surprised to see her I did not know what to say. She started speaking:

—You weren't expecting to see me here, were you? Do not think wrongly of me. I realized that you were leaving soon and I came here to say goodbye.

—Thank you very much. I don't know how to pray for you after all your attention and compliments. Your visit is such an honor, such a consolation. However, excuse me but I can't comprehend something. How can a man who is stuck in a cage leave?

—There are many mysteries in our country. I don't really know but it is certain that you are going back to Andalusia very soon. It is time to say goodbye.

—I thank you again and again.

—Abbas Effendi, I have one more wish. You're leaving the country. Is there anything that you are not satisfied with? Why are you so eager to leave? As you have seen, in Darürrahat, science, truth, and happiness take the center. In your land, tyranny and wars are going on, no one is comfortable... stay, sir, don't go!

I couldn't find the words to answer her words; what strange people! I was stuck in stone prison and they plead "Stay, don't go". Where would I go if I could? How was I going to get out of this stone prison, through the closed Iron Gate? Either there was something wrong with my mind or the people of Darürrahat! In any way, I repeated my intentions of pilgrimage and my desire to go.

—If this is the case, may God be with you," said Feride Banu and left. As she went out, my old friend Sheikh Celal came and said his goodbyes. They brought food for me again. To ease my head turning with ideas and the sentiment I had because of saying goodbye to these people, I ate quite a lot. When the guard came to pick up the table, I fell into a wonderful sleep.

When I finally slept enough and opened my eyes, I noticed that I was in a well-lit room with big windows. It was definitely not the prison cell of the Kadi. I was lying down in the bed and an older European lady was sitting at my bedside. My God! What was going on?

—Where is this? Where am I?

Since I asked in Arabic, the lady didn't understand my question, she said in French:

—Calm down, you are safe.

—“For god sake, tell me where I am” I asked in French.

—You are in Augustine Hospital in Granada.

—How long have I been here?

—For six days.

—Where was I before?

—I don't know, son.

—What is the date?

—August 28.

I started thinking. I came to this hospital on August 22. It was August 9 when I came to the Kadi's prison, so thirteen days passed. When I met the girls at Alhambra Palace and came to Darürrahat it was the 15th of July. According to this calculation I spent about forty days in Darürrahat. But how did I end up in this hospital? God, oh God!

Surprised by my many questions, the old lady called another man. Someone came in the room. He turned out to be a doctor. He softly asked how I was.

—How are you feeling? Are you okay?

—Thank God, I am fine.

—Do you have any pain anywhere?

—No, nothing is hurting.

—Do you have your strength?

—No, I have no strength. I feel exhausted.

He checked my hand, eyes and tongue. He shrugged his shoulders showing he didn't know what the problem was but he didn't say anything. After that he said, “don't worry, sir. You will recover your strength soon.” I couldn't pay much attention to his word. I kept thinking about Darürrahat. As the doctor was looking at my eyes, I asked him how I ended up in this hospital.

—You were not fully conscious. They found you around the mountains near Alhambra. You were exhausted. Now, thank God, you are better.

—What is my problem? Why am I exhausted?

—We don't know, I am very curious to find out.

I realized that I didn't have any illness. I was put to sleep with something unknown to the Europeans and taken out of Darürrahat. If I had had any illness, the doctor would have known it.

The doctor asked, "Who are you? Where are you from? The clothes we found on you indicate that you are not Spanish."

—I am from Tashkent. My name is Abbas.

—When did you come to Granada?

—Beginning of July.

—Where were you until now?

—I was in the Madrid guesthouse. My belongings should be there. I left my money with a jeweler named Marus. I spend three to four days in the city and then a week in Alhambra Palace and visited old Islamic works of art ...

—Alright, where did you spend time after that? Who did you talk to?

I couldn't answer the doctor's questions at once. I didn't think it was appropriate to expose the presence of Darürrahat that has been hidden for many centuries. That's why I told him I that I couldn't answer his question.

—As you wish, sir. However, if you tell everything openly and do not hide anything, it will be helpful to you. Your exhaustion is a curious condition.

—Then I am letting you know that I was in a strange country for about forty days. But I can't tell you the name and location. The doctor tried to hide his smile from me. When I saw that I got upset and sad, "If you're going to ask me that question, believe the answer. If you are not going to believe me, don't ask questions."

After spending many days in the hospital, I gained my health and strength. I was given permission to get up and read some newspapers by the doctor. He was coming to my room twice a day and having conversations with me. He talked to me about my condition and what happened to me. He

explained that I was very exhausted for thirty to forty days. He couldn't determine what kind of the problem I had. I started feeling some suspicions about the presence of Darürrahat but remembering what I saw there, I left those doubts behind. If we believe in what the doctor thinks, I was sick and all I wrote about Darürrahat was the product of a feverish imagination. But where was I in the forty days in between Alhambra Palace and the hospital? How did I not starve to death in those forty days? There were so many crowded villages around Granada. How could they not see me? If I was unconscious, they would have taken me to hospital right away. There weren't too many days in between the time they decided to send me away from Darürrahat and the time they found me and brought me to the hospital. If I hadn't spent forty days in Darürrahat, they would have found me right away. The doctor didn't know what my ailment was. Wasn't it obvious that the Muslims of Darürrahat gave me a medicine that is unknown to these Europeans so that I wouldn't see the road that they took me outside their country? The poor European doctor was telling me, "You have a strange ailment!" Before they put me into the prison cell of the Kadi, they took away all my clothes and made me put on my old clothes. They also took all of the objects related to Darürrahat from me. When you think about the fact that I didn't have anything to show about this hidden country, it was impossible to be amazed at their precautions.

If they ask me whether I took an object or anything from this country that I stayed for forty days, I have to say, "No, I didn't." In this case the doctor is going to look at me as someone who is sick.

I wrote earlier that when I said, "I wouldn't expose your hidden place and your secret," they told me, "It is up to you, we are not forbidding you from saying it." I think they said this because they knew that no one would believe me and that people would think that I was making things up. What strange people! It bothered me that the doctor didn't believe my words, so I had to tell my story to him. Why shouldn't I have? The

Muslims of Darürrahat gave me their permission. They didn't make me promise silence. The doctor listened to my story carefully and said, "There can't be a hidden country as such." I told him, "Let's go to the Alhambra Palace. I will show you the tunnel in the road starting from the girls' castle."

We arrived at the palace. The doctor talked to the keeper of the palace and took a servant with a pick and a shovel and came to the girls' castle. Inside I showed them a stone lid that Sheikh Celal removed before. I remembered the staircase in the hidden road to Darürrahat. This servant moved the marble stone with difficulty and took it out. We looked and saw only pressed soil underneath it, no tunnel and no staircase!

—See, sir. Do you now realize that your travels were a figment of your imagination?

—Yes sir.

Even though I said yes, sir, I realized that the Muslims of Darürrahat must have known about what was going to happen and that is why they came and destroyed the start of this road. I said to myself, "well done." I told the doctor, "Let's dig for a couple of archines, the road will be there," but the Spaniards didn't believe me and put the stone back. How about Sheikh Celal? He was the person who took me to Darürrahat. I had seen him in Paris before all of this. I wonder where he is right now? If he is not in Paris, it will be obvious that my travel was not imaginary.

I went to Paris right away. As soon as I got there, I went to the Palace Royal bazaar and look for Sheikh Celal. He wasn't there. I asked his neighbors and they said, "He went to bring goods." When I asked when he left, the answer they gave me coincided with the time when I went to Spain and spent days in Alhambra, so I understood that I really had been to Darürrahat.

Gaspirali's Restless "Education of Desire."

Sharon Carson

"When the function of Utopia is to catalyze change, then of course the issue of practical possibility becomes salient. But even here, utopia does not need to be practically possible; it merely needs to be believed to be so to mobilize people to political action ... Utopia expresses and explores what is desired; under certain conditions it also contains the hope that these desires may be met in reality, rather than merely in fantasy. The essential element in utopia is not hope, but desire—The desire for a better way of being. It involves the imagining of a state of being in which the problems which actually confront us are removed or resolved, often but not necessarily, through the imagining of a state of the world in which the scarcity gap is closed or the 'collective problem' is solved." (Levitas COU 221)

"Where utopian literature is concerned—and this may be equally true of other artistic forms—Abensour sees the main function as estrangement or making the familiar unfamiliar. The utopian experiment disrupts the taken-for-granted nature of the present. It creates a space in which the reader may, temporarily, experience an alternative configuration of needs, wants and satisfactions." (Levitas, UAM, 4)

"Sheikh Celal pointed at the hole in the ground and told me 'jump in there' ... What could I do ... I let myself go as if I am falling into my grave. My feet touched a stone staircase. I

descended thirty or forty steps ... There was such a darkness that is impossible to find on earth. My head was full of ideas, and my heart was full of fear. Where am I going? Why am I going? What is going to happen to me? My God!" (Mullah Abbas, *The Muslims of Darürrahat*)

In *The Muslims of Darürrahat*, Ismail Gaspirali's utopian narrative drops readers—along with our guide, Mullah Abbas—into a hidden 19th century world, a Muslim utopia that had been created by refugees expelled from 15th century Al-Andalus during wartime, a sanctuary world built according to the lights of science, engineering and progressive Islamic cultural reform. Gaspirali paints Darürrahat as a paradise on earth, a place where he seeks through literary art to resolve—at least temporarily—the tensions he grappled with in his own time. Gaspirali labored throughout his life to reform Muslim education, social life, and political journalism in Central Asia and the wider Islamic world. Even more particularly, as a Crimean Tatar intellectual working in Central Asia, he was responding to Russian imperialist pressures on predominantly Muslim communities on one hand, and traditionalist Muslim religious leaders pushing back against “modernist” Muslim cultural and theological reforms on the other. Gaspirali was a person constantly between worlds, and Darürrahat in this story is Gaspirali's utopian “peaceful country,” an imaginary place exemplifying his utopian hope.

But Darürrahat is also a utopian land where Mullah Abbas, our awe-struck narrator, experiences such mental stress and existential “dislocation” that he cannot stay. This uneasiness is combined with Gaspirali's frequent focus in the story on the emotional stress Mullah Abbas suffers as a result of his in-between identity, the stress of what we might call his “liminal mind.” For Mullah Abbas, Darürrahat is a beautiful but complex and troubled utopia.

The Muslims of Darürrahat does not offer readers of any era a static blueprint map. Rather, it's a literary work attempting to "educate desire" in 19th century readers by dislocating, and making strange, the world of their present. As a utopian literary journalist, Gaspirali blends his confidence in the liberatory possibilities of reason, science, education, technology, and compassionate theology with his genuine respect for some aspects of cultural and religious traditionalism. Darürrahat's residents are Muslim modernists, and its cityscapes are crafted in the aesthetics of Islamic cosmological design and harmonic symmetry. But Gaspirali also highlights traces of fear and authoritarian constraint in Darürrahat itself. As a work of utopian fiction, *The Muslims of Darürrahat*, invites readers to *critique* their own troubled, beautiful, restless, and contradictory worlds, an invitation Gaspirali extended toward his international readers in the 1890s, and an invitation that we hope will interest readers today.

What follows are interpretive fragments aimed at opening just a few literary and philosophical windows for further work with *The Muslims of Darürrahat*.

I. Lament

It is 1880, and Mullah Abbas, the narrator in *The Muslims of Darürrahat*, leaves Paris to travel to Spain. The story opens with Abbas's travelogue description of Spain, comprised of an extended account of the Muslim conquest, rule, and eventual loss of Al-Andalus, or Andalusia. Later in the story we'll hear our narrator and other characters further lament this "lost world," coupled with glowing recollections of the remarkable historical accomplishments of Islamic science, arts, philosophy, and literature in Al-Andalus from 711 CE to 1492 CE.

Gaspirali works with this memory of an Andalusian Golden Age as a rhetoric of history, and through the story he offers a retrospective (and for Gaspirali, prospective?) celebration of Islamic modernity, which Gaspirali locates in Islamic sciences,

literatures, philosophy, and especially education. Abbas and later other characters such as Feride Banu and Darürrahat's modernist imam serve as ventriloquists for Gaspirali's own 19th century priorities as a reform educator, journalist, and activist.

While Gaspirali's own life involved activism across national borders and he worked in strikingly difficult colonial and anti-colonial contexts, a key dimension of *The Muslims of Dariürrahat* is that at almost every moment of cultural critique within the story, the critique is pointed toward tensions *within* the expansive Islamic world. The political and critical scope remains internal to transnational Muslim cultural and political debates, while at the same time projecting Gaspirali's own "modernizing" theories of progress for the *ummah*, not just in his own region but across the Muslim world. Lament in *The Muslims of Dariürrahat* is linked to cultural self-definition within Islamic societies; lament here is close to the heart.

In his historical retrospective, Abbas laments the loss of Islamic governance, science, wisdom, economic strength and culture as a consequence primarily of failures within Muslim society and by those ruling Al-Andalus: "Just as disunity and disorder among the Christians caused the conquest of Andalusia and the success of the Muslims, the disorder among the people of Islam and the unity and perseverance taking place in Christian minds caused the collapse of the Andalusian state." (*The Muslims of Dariürrahat* hereafter MOD, 6)

Later in the story, Feride Banu emerges as Abbas's most attentive guide in Darürrahat, and she too laments a lost and retrospectively utopian Andalusian past while adding her own visions of an imagined recovery. Feride, in many ways the central philosopher of the story and the central female character, works as a doctor and serves as narrative personification of humanistic scientific knowledge.

Feride offers Abbas an extended tutorial in her first long exhortation, starting with her retrospective description of Andalusia as having been a "school for the world; the people there were exemplary teachers of the world. Poems, verses, and

songs that were the signs of delight and prosperity were sung and recited from one end of the country to the other end, waking up Europeans from their blind sleep.” (MOD, 19)

But she follows immediately with a description of universal dualisms and tragic cultural decline, invoking Andalusia’s past, and clearly, via analogical imagination, Gaspirali’s worries for the world in his own 19th century. Says Feride: “Whatever [is] human cannot be permanent because we carry in ourselves both being and nothingness, both the reason for progress and decline! We have both the poison that destroys us and the spiritual strength that delights us in our own bodies. Truthfulness and selfishness, fairness and tyranny, compassion and cruelty, laziness and fear, all belong to human beings. Whichever of these is found in abundance, the human community forms itself according to that.” (MOD, 19-20)

Like the narrator Mullah Abbas and others in the story who lament the collapse of an Andalusia’s Islamic Golden Age, Feride focuses her critique on “weakness” and conflict among Muslims and on failures among the *ulama* (scholars, traditionalists) as the ultimate reason for Andalusia’s decline and ultimate loss.

Her speech travels across time: it’s essentially an allegorical lament for a lost past while her account simultaneously critiques the present for Gaspirali’s readers. Her lament, much like Abbas’s earlier retrospective history, blends nostalgia for a lost past with an implicit argument for what must be recreated for a better future. This time-multiplying layering is what the education of readers’ desire frequently looks like in *The Muslims of Darürrahat*.

Feride is also the speaker in the story who most sharply clarifies that the founding of utopian Darürrahat came from catastrophes of war and dislocation. Darürrahat is a country built by war refugees, after a desperate escape by the last Muslim survivors of Christian conquest, who flee from Andalusia through a secret tunnel under Alhambra Palace. It is Feride who takes us from “war history” to utopian present, and

rhetorically, her speeches point both backward across time to glory, loss and grief, and forward in time toward peace and a desired better future.

Space doesn't allow for a full analysis here of Gaspirali's rhetoric of lament and the multiple temporal dimensions in the story's Andalusian imagination-scape. But the urgency and underlying tension in this story does illuminate some of the intense cultural crosscurrents within which Gaspirali was working as writer and educational reformer in the late 1880s. For example, later in *The Muslims of Darürrahat*, we will find Gaspirali aiming at Islamic traditionalism and its resistance to "new method" education reforms by using the voices first of a village imam, and later, Darürrahat's amir, to pull readers toward an enlightened Islamic modernism. Given Gaspirali's own position as a middle figure of and between several worlds, this is intriguing literary ventriloquism.

II. Liminality

The Muslims of Darürrahat is full of liminal moments and episodic outbursts during which Mullah Abbas and other characters experience (or recount) the stresses and pleasures of disrupted states of consciousness. Liminality, that undefined and sometimes chaotic state of being "in between" mental, temporal, or physical locations, keeps the story from hitting the pitfalls of reductive blueprint utopian art.

Abbas frequently exclaims that he is "losing his mind" when he encounters new locations, innovative cultural practices, literally dark spaces, or amazing technology. It starts in Alhambra palace, in the first moments of his fantastical journey to Darürrarhat:

"Sheikh Celal pointed at the hole in the ground and told me 'jump in there' ... What could I do ... I let myself go as if I am falling into my grave. My feet touched a stone staircase. I descended thirty or forty steps ... There was such a darkness that is impossible to find on earth. My head was full of ideas,

and my heart was full of fear. Where am I going? Why am I going? What is going to happen to me? My God!" (Mullah Abbas, *MOD*, 12)

And as the story ends, he'll wonder anxiously if his journey to Darürrahat was a dream, the ultimate liminal state of mind between worlds.

Gaspirali's story also repeatedly emphasizes that our narrator and Darürrahat itself are "between east and west," neither Tashkent nor Paris, neither Turkistan nor Europe.

Even more specifically, and this is key to understanding Gaspirali as a Pan-Islamic Crimean Tatar intellectual, educator, activist, and journalist: Mullah Abbas and the utopian world of Darürrahat signify symbolically neither "east" nor "west," neither traditionalist Crimean madrasah nor Russian military school, neither entrenched traditionalist Muslim theocracy nor Paris university.

Here is Abbas, on the secret underground road to Darürrahat: "Sheikh [Celal] ... tell me, where is this strange road leading[?]. It is obvious where you get if you ride the camels in Turkistan or if you ride the trains in Europe. I cannot comprehend the road that I fell onto!" (*MOD*, 13)

Abbas again, still enroute to Darürrahat: "Tell me Sheikh, is this country in this world? I am getting confused." Sheikh Celal replies: "Yes, son, it is in this world, yet none of the historians or geographers of the east or the west know this place." (*MOD*, 14)

And the technological wonders of Darürrahat are also outside, or between, any east/west binary: Abbas, in the darkness of the hidden tunnel, "... the torches were burning on their own ... full of electric power and were built in a way that had never been seen in our world! Looking at these torches, I realize that these people and their land [were] not behind and possibly ahead of Europe in terms of philosophy, mechanics, and skills even though they do not have any communication

with Europe Strange!” (MOD, 16). And later, he is in awe of the buildings, gardens, and infrastructures of this utopian land.

In fact, architecture (city and landscape) looms large in the visual design of *The Muslims of Dariürrahat*, and in most cases, architecture serves to highlight Islamic aesthetics and Dariürrahat’s technological wonders. But there is an interesting dimension to “architecture” that is much less static, and this concept is offered in the work of Ruth Levitas, embedded in her theories of utopian imagination and a sociological method she calls the Imaginary Reconstitution of Society. This more philosophical take on architecture is closer to liminal fluidity than fixed structures, and her three-mode critique offers all kinds of possible directions for interpreting utopian art:

“Utopia as a method has three modes. The first is an archaeological mode, piecing together the images of a good society that are embedded in political programmes and social and economic policies. The second is an ontological mode which addresses the question of what kinds of *people* particular societies develop and encourage. What is understood as human flourishing, what capabilities are valued, encouraged, and genuinely enabled, or blocked and suppressed, by specific existing or potential social arrangements: we are concerned here with the historical and social determination of human nature ... The third is an architectural mode—that is, the imagination of potential alternative scenarios for the future, acknowledging the assumptions about and consequences for the people who might inhabit them. These in turn must be subject to archaeological critique, addressing the silences and inconsistencies all such images must contain, as well as the political steps forward that they imply. These are not, then, three different methods, but three aspects to the same method subject to shifting emphases” (Levitas, *UAM*, 153)

So even in a literary land of natural beauty, aesthetically stunning structures and seemingly settled lifeways, “Utopia as method is not and cannot be blueprint. Utopian envisioning is necessarily provisional, reflexive, and dialogic.” (Levitas, *UAM*, 218)

And Mullah Abbas’s mental state remains stressfully liminal throughout the story, with no relief for him in the story’s ending, with Darürrahat fading into vague mists of memory and his own future left uncharted.

III. Blindfolds

As a fiction writer, Gaspirali plays figuratively with material objects in a way that shows the complex rhetorical energies in *The Muslims of Darürrahat*. Blindfolds, as just one example, figure early on in the story as a mechanism of transition from one place or state of mind to another, but they also signal barriers to perception and knowledge.

When Abbas and his guides first arrive in Darürrahat, they take off the blindfolds they wore on the trek underground to reach the “new place.” Their blindfolds off, sunlight pours into a beautiful room “decorated in Islamic customs,” with the sounds of fountain waters and sweet smells of nature carried in the breeze. Blindfolds off, the story marks a new capacity for sight, opening for Abbas a fresh visual take on aesthetics of Islamic architecture and nature’s beauty.

Then later, as Abbas sits with the imam of a village in Darürrahat, he’s asked to tell his hosts about Tashkent, Bukhara and, Turkistan. Abbas’s account emphasizes the traditionalism of his homeland, and the imam from Darürrahat is shocked by the apparent lack of advanced sciences, modernist theology, and progressive education. Shocked in other words by Abbas’s portrait of his homeland’s neglect of the fruits of progressive “modernism.” The Darürrahat imam in this exchange becomes

the voice of Gaspirali's longstanding criticism of overly traditionalist Islamic societies, and the imam flips the metaphor of the blindfold:

"Son, can a person walk blindfolded? You do not know about the soil but you try to plant; you don't know the water but you drink it; you don't know the world but you live your life in this world ... Such a shame, such a neglect! May God give you reason ... I am extremely sad about your situation." (MOD, 30)

Here the blindfold metaphor underscores Gaspirali's internal critique of his own community and the *umma* more broadly, and again, the dialogue here is framed between two Muslim speakers, sitting together in a fully Islamic utopian land. As Adeeb Khalid points out in *Central Asia: A New History from the Imperial Conquests to the Present*, Jadids (including Gaspirali) were "fascinated by modernity," and while supportive of many of the philosophical and social ideas of Enlightenment modernism, they were also wary of—and frequently directly opposed to—European and specifically Russian colonialist and imperialist designs.

Says Khalid: "They had appropriated the ideas of progress and civilization as well as their cognate, advancement. These Enlightenment ideas came to them more through Ottoman or Tatar translations than through Russian texts, and the ideas radically transformed the Jadids' worldview. Progress and civilization for them were universal phenomena, achievable by and necessary to all societies. Societies that fell behind because of 'negligence and ignorance' were conquered and marginalized. The Jadid project was therefore directed inward, at Muslim society, rather than at the Russians ... The Jadids sought to lift 'the curtain' of ignorance that they thought prevented their compatriots from seeing the bitter truth." (Khalid 2, 120)

Khalid refers to this broad cultural project, within which Gaspirali (and *The Muslims of Darürrahat*) are deeply embedded as "intensely didactic theater" (120), which shared with other later 19th and early 20th century movements for social

reform a fondness for “the metaphor of awakening ... Reform also involved a radical imagination of community” (Khalid 2, 121).

However, unlike the imam in the story, who invokes the blindfold metaphor in support of modernist progress, and unlike the later appearance of Darürrahat’s enlightened amir, the strongly traditionalist *ulama* in Gaspirali’s actual world “firmly opposed reforms, declaring the new method of schooling to be *haram* (that is, impermissible according to Islamic norms). The more zealous among them also pronounced reading newspapers or going to the theater *haram*. The lines were drawn clearly and the advocacy of reform created immense discord in urban society in Turkistan” (Khalid 2, 126).

The blindfold metaphor in the story can be read as Gaspirali’s symbolic work with a very specific material object to point, via literary art, toward these very serious cultural conflicts.

IV. Fear

Some recent literary criticism (see Nebioğlu) has suggested that this story in its 1906 iteration as the novel *Darürrahat Muslimanlari*, and Gaspirali as a writer generally, replicate authoritarian religious tendencies within the spectrum of 19th century Islamic culture. Other interpreters have suggested that Gaspirali leaned too far and problematically toward European constructs of Enlightenment progress, or that he grew too cozy with Russian imperial authorities.

The longstanding work of Edward Lazzerini and recent scholarship by Adeeb Khalid offers useful insight for evaluating these critiques. Both scholars reveal Gaspirali as a thinker, writer and education reformer who cannot be dismissed as “accommodationist” in any direction. But this is not to discount the real tensions within his life and work. These tensions appear in *The Muslims of Darürrahat* as well, but with sufficient

irony and narrative play to make clear that Gaspirali was both a critic of authoritarianism and someone well aware of the perils of dangerously sunny utopian hopes.

In the story, these tensions are most visible specifically in the thematic appearance of fear and anxiety, and specifically when fear and anxiety are linked to questions of freedom: freedom for our narrator and by extension, freedom for all citizens of “the comfortable country.” With these literary choices, Gaspirali introduces within this story clear tensions between the political authority of Darürrahat as a state and the possibility of autonomy for individuals who live there.

Abbas experiences anxiety, awe, and fear at moments throughout the story, especially, as we have seen, in those sharply liminal moments of dislocation or abrupt changes in his physical location or mental state. In fact, in this regard he has much in common with other time traveling utopian dreamers, including the awe-struck Julien West of *Looking Backward*.

But another kind of fear and anxiety emerges toward the end of the story, when Abbas decides that he wants to leave Darürrahat and asks the Amir’s permission to go. The Amir has just finished a long discourse which seems to ventriloquize Gaspirali’s own hopes for progressive reform in a theological, politically, and socially modernized Muslim society, and Abbas has listened with respect and interest. But even though the Amir reassures Abbas that “...you will be comfortable in our country. You won’t see any sorrow, sadness, or anxiety here,” Abbas requests permission to leave Darürrahat.

And the Amir says no. Vaguely, but firmly. “For certain reasons, there is no way out of our country” (*MOD*, 62).

The affective tone of the story shifts abruptly here, even as the Amir promises to take Abbas’s request to “the assembly” for their consideration. Abbas is worried, and his anxiety remains unrelieved, even after a long evening of congenial talking with Feride and her family about progressive education and all kinds of cultural advances by and for women in Darürrahat.

Things take an even more ominous turn when the next stage decision (still a firm “No”) by the Amir/Assembly is announced to Mullah Abbas in a futuristic scene where the wonders of technology are linked via a phone call to the denial of Abbas’s wish to leave Darürrahat. It’s a sharp but interestingly reciprocal phone exchange, since Abbas refuses to accept that he cannot leave on his own volition: “I can’t give up the idea of going back to my country. What is my guilt? Why are you keeping me here as a captive? I am a free Muslim, I intend to go on the pilgrimage and your decision about me is violent and tyrannical.”

The voice on the other end of the call then says: “Your wish has been registered. Do not be afraid of harm or danger.” (*MOD*, 68)

Given this phrasing, Abbas is of course not reassured, and now even more afraid of harm or danger: “What was going to happen to me? What is the harm they are talking about? My head felt as if there were ten horses running in it” (*MOD*, 68).

Ensuing nightfall brings no relief to our narrator: “I couldn’t sleep all night. All kinds of ideas, fears and nightmares were filling my head.” (*MOD*, 68)

But the following morning, in an abrupt reversal of his fate, Abbas is given permission to leave Darurrahahat. This time the news comes from his mentor, Sheikh Celal: “Son, the assembly gave permission for you to leave. No one can force anybody to do anything without their will.”

And to emphasize, Sheikh Celal adds, “The permission is given without any conditions.”

This interesting exchange between them follows, starting with Abbas:

—“Without conditions? What does this mean? Is it okay if I expose Darürrahat to Spain or France?

—If you want to, you can...

—If I do, won’t Europeans come and invade your country?

—Maybe. Only God will know.

—But I will not expose. A fish will talk more than I will.”

Well, things don't exactly go this way, but we won't spoil the ending.

Key, though, is that this passage is followed not by relief, but by more fear and anxiety for Abbas during a process by which he is essentially "turned out" of Darürrahat. During this transition, he is confined in what seems to him a dark prison cell, where he languishes in "complete darkness like a dungeon" (MOD, 70).

Abbas is distressed and confused: "How did this happen? They were going to let me go, why did they put me in here? If they weren't going to let me go, what was the use of prison? The whole country was a kind of prison for me."

But then he adds: "However, it was a pleasant and comfortable prison." (MOD, 70)

It's an odd interjection, especially given the emancipatory undercurrents in the story, along with Gaspirali's clear *critique* of authoritarianism. And there is no settling of these tensions here. Long ending short: Through means which remain mysterious, and may involve narcotic libations, Abbas does leave his dark liminal cell and the peaceful country of Darürrahat. Gaspirali deploys several familiar devices of 19th century utopian fiction to get him out: long slumbers, dreams, mysteriously changed clothes, hospital awakenings, and incredulous interrogators once he is "back in the real world."

V. Education of Desire

So, the story reveals a persisting uneasiness and anxiety even for a visitor to Darürrahat like Mullah Abbas, who has been otherwise awed by this aesthetically stunning and progressively advanced utopian world. As we've seen, this anxiety in Abbas's case is linked to his assertion that he has the freedom to leave.

It's interesting that the first thing Abbas does when he is finally granted permission to depart Darürrahat is to visit a school there before he goes, and at the school he has a striking epiphany wherein his own previous "bad education" is revealed to him. But this bad education is revealed as not just a

fluke suffered by Abbas, and not just a quality of the traditionalist madrassahs he has already criticized in his own accounts of Tashkent, but also the result of his university education in Paris.

Upon hearing the exhilarating curriculum in this utopian Darürrahat school, Abbas thinks to himself:

“I realized that all I have known up till now was like an island in an ocean. All the information and knowledge I received in Paris were mixed up in my head confusing me. I tried to get my head together and focused on a couple of ideas I learned about Europe...” (MOD, 69)

It might seem like the last line here signals the narrator’s (and Gaspirali’s?) privileging of “Europe” as a place and mind-set distinct from those inhabited by “the people of Islam.” But there are two pressures in the story itself against that way of reading it.

First, as we’ve seen, our narrator embodies a middle space between any oversimplified or dichotomous east-west frame for seeing the world: Abbas himself, like Gaspirali, was “of Tashkent,” and “of Paris,” but not fully of either. The ending of the story shows a jumble of mixed emotions for the narrator, where his return to Europe from utopian Darürrahat only intensifies the multiple pulls on his identity.

Second, even given undercurrent tensions, the world of Darürrahat is fully textured as a progressive Islamic society, with Muslim theology described in modernist terms, including echoes of natural theology, and where science, technology, and enlightened social practices are at every turn embedded in the architecture of a fully Islamic culture. There is no “turn to Europe” in the details of Darürrahat, except perhaps in Gaspirali’s (and other Jadidists?) claims that their own notions of reform and progress reflected a *universal* turn in human history.

This cultural confidence, as embodied in the details of Darürrahat, along with the story’s implicit claim for the value of utopian art in the Muslim world, constitutes an “education of desire” for readers along the philosophical lines once again sketched by Ruth Levitas in her work on utopian imagination:

“When the function of Utopia is to catalyze change, then of course the issue of practical possibility becomes salient. But even here, utopia does not need to be practically possible; it merely needs to be believed to be so to mobilize people to political action ... Utopia expresses and explores what is desired; under certain conditions it also contains the hope that these desires may be met in reality, rather than merely in fantasy. The essential element in utopia is not hope, but desire—The desire for a better way of being. It involves the imagining of a state of being in which the problems which actually confront us are removed or resolved, often but not necessarily, through the imagining of a state of the world in which the scarcity gap is closed or the ‘collective problem’ is solved.” (Levitas COU 221)

But as Levitas also emphasizes, particularly in her critique of socialist utopian writer William Morris and his fiction (*News from Nowhere*, 1890), one of the perils of utopian imagination is that a visionary projection or “education of desire” toward better possible futures can become either too detached from the concrete conditions of history to help navigate the actual present, or conversely and to some degree inevitably, utopian projection can become too confined by the limitations that *historicity* places on our capacity to imagine freely or anew. Here, Levitas quotes Morris to underscore her own philosophical caution:

“It is impossible to build a scheme for the society of the future, for no man can really think himself out of his own days.’ For this reason, ‘his palace of days to come can only be constructed by the aspirations forced on him by his present surroundings, and from his dreams of the life of the past, which themselves cannot fail to be more or last unsubstantial imaginings.’” (Levitas, COU 145)

It seems undoubtably true that no person can escape an inherently analogical imagination: we can't fully think ourselves out of our own days, and we remain inheritors of habits of thought, perception and action which we acquire by virtue of our time and place in history. *The Muslims of Darürrahat* is a fascinating story in part because Gaspirali is no exception to these historical limits, even as he drops us along with Mullah Abbas into a braver new world. Gaspirali avoids creating a simplistic blueprint utopia, but as he works to think anew, he inevitably offers instead a beautiful but still very familiar "uncomfortable" country, a country which clearly embodies emancipatory progress and potential for a better future, but a country and a world which has not eliminated real problems and whose future remains contingent and unknown.

By offering this English translation of *The Muslims of Darürrahat* into the transnational mix of utopian literary art, we hope that the imaginary landscape of our "own days" can be invigorated just a bit—and made usefully restless.

Why and How I Found Ismail Bey Gaspirali

Edward J. Lazzerini¹



Some five decades ago I began contemplating the topic for my dissertation as a doctoral student of Russian imperial history. Having already studied multiple languages since high school—Latin, French, German, Chinese, and Russian—I had a natural inclination to think quite broadly about what a historian might pursue. Moreover, because I had already studied Russian history for several years under renowned specialists, I had an organized appreciation of the main thrusts of Russian experience, the standard historical divisions applied across time, the figures of prominence in many fields, and, increasingly, the extraordinary complexity within the population, augmented spectacularly in the wake of near constant Russian expansion emanating in the fifteenth century and not ending until the 1890s. That phenomenon weighed heavily on my thinking, encouraging me to undertake study of an additional language, Turkish (modern and Ottoman), so as to open up Russia's Orient, particularly Central Asia. The latter region had a deep and rich historiography in Russia and across Europe followed by emerging contributions from American scholars. There were, however,

1 The figure above depicts innumerable artistic images of the character named Molla Nasreddin or Nasreddin Hodja, who from the thirteenth century to the present, served Muslim cultures as a humorous hero constantly delivering satirical anecdotes. A simple but telling example would be: One day Molla was asked, "How is it you always answer a question with another question?" "Do I?" he replied. Who may have drawn this image cannot be identified.



Map from the satirical Azerbaijani journal *Molla Nasreddin*, No. 6 (1910), showing Europe and Japan as prosperous and developed while the rest of Asia is portrayed as lands of slackers and oppressed lower classes.

several major historical issues impacting the pursuit of Central Asian history within the Russian context about which I seemed to be one of only a few concerned young historians.

The troublesome issues were several, although all were interrelated: First, Central Asia was so dominant among historians that critical exterior regions—Crimea, the Volga-Kama territory, and Azerbaijan—were quite literally ignored; second, despite limited scholarly interest, these regions were much more vital than Central Asia owing to their deeper cultural relations with Russia and the earlier development of modern thought and culture among the local indigenous peoples; and third, these developments coalesced under the rubric of a movement popularly known as *jadidism*, from *iusCil-i jadid* (the New Method), which addressed education with revolutionary spirit,

conceptually and practically, followed by enthusiasm for the many aspects of modernity as initially pursued in Western Europe.

Addressing the histories of the three Turkic territories outside of Central Asia began to reveal to what extent the issues above were exceptional within the Russian imperial context. They also revealed the perennial links to Ottoman Turkey as they drifted toward the new aspects of modernity. Subtle links as well tied the three territories together by their attractions to *jadid*, and brought to increasing light the evolving career of the Crimean Tatar Ismail Bey Gaspirah (1851-1914), as an intellectual, social reformer, publisher, and central figure in the history of *jadidism*.

For more than two decades, during which I was unable to work in Soviet libraries and archives owing to continued state insistence on closure to American scholars with projects such as mine, I relied on access to such facilities in other European countries and Turkey. During these years I was able to complete my dissertation,² take up a university position, and produce a modest number of articles on Gaspirah and his activities. It was only in the early 1990s that the political situation in the USSR underwent dramatic changes that finally allowed me to visit Azerbaijan and Crimea (the latter repeatedly during the decade) to gain access not only to numerous rare Russian- and Turkic-language publications but also to archival documents. Then, at the beginning of 2001, I was able to visit and work in Kazan, an opportunity that was itself repeated on numerous occasions over the next decade. During those two decades I was able to discover much of what had rarely been seen before, all of which made possible a full intellectual biography of Gaspirah now nearing completion as well as the

2 Edward J. Lazzerini, "Ismail Bey Gasprinskii and Muslim Modernism in Russia, 1878-1914," PhD. Diss., University of Washington, 1973.

gathering of an enormous number of texts by and about the man still unknown but now being translated into English for a digital project.³

These paragraphs provide a brief description as to **why** and **how** I found Gaspıralı. There is, however, one source among thousands that I discovered that more than any other has identified **who** it was that I found. It is a twenty-five-page piece of autobiographical writing from İsmail Bey's own hand entitled "The New Day has Come, a New Time and a New People: A Novel about a Nation."⁴ It appeared in serial fashion in his Turkic newspaper (but not offered in Russian in *Perevodchik*) in ten issues in 1905-1906, and covers his life at the very moment he decided to undertake that which would define all of

3 The project is entitled "The World of İsmail Bey Gasprinskii: A Collaborative Translation Project" and is organized into an Introduction and five parts: Archival Records, Texts Reflecting Gasprinskii, The Texts of Others to Gasprinskii, Commentary on Gasprinskii, and Marginalia. Taking many years and visits to many places, my experiences turning up and gathering these texts were filled with frequent adventure. One example occurred in 1973 as I had just arrived at the Lenin Library in Moscow, registered for its use, and wended my way down the marble stairs to the grand area where the public card catalogues were located. As I stood before the mass with an obvious look of frustration, I realized once again as I had in Leningrad planning to work at its great library, the *Publichka*, that what I needed to find was not in these drawers! At that moment, a staffer was hurrying by when, seeing the distress on my face, she asked "May I help you?" Hearing of my simple but odd interests, she beckoned me to follow, through a labyrinth of desks, staffers, and offices into the bowels of the library where, as the lighting grew dimmer and dimmer and the signs of activity literally disappeared, we arrived at the door to a darkened room. Throwing the entrance open, she flicked on the lights and there stood alone the hidden card catalogue that contained the records of thousands of Turkic-language texts published in the Russian Empire! Wishing me well, she left the room and closed the door. I had barely three weeks to scour the hundreds of drawers, and never had an opportunity to return. For that matter, there is no evidence that any other Western scholar has been to that room since?

4 "Gun Dogdu: Yeni Zaman ve Yeni Kinder (Millî Roman), *Ter-cuman*, No. 92 (9 November 1905); No. 93 (11 November 1905); No. 103 (9 December 1905); No. 106 (19 December 1905); (11 January 1906); No. 6 (20 January 1906); No. 7 (30 January 1906); No. 8 (1 February 1906); No. 9 (3 February 1906); No. 10 (6 February 1906). An English translation is now available: Golshat Safiullina and Edward J. Lazzerini, "The New Day has Come, a New Time and a New People: A Novel about a Nation."



Appearing in *Molla Nasreddin* [No. 47, (1909)], this cartoon shows a Muslim cleric in deep slumber among rocks and bushes, while a wild bear, representing Russia, approaches to awaken him with a large stone aimed at his head.

its direction and meaning. It began with his traveling across Turkic society within Russia for a year after he had completed his education, during which he became

“acquainted with many village people, handicraftsman, merchants, and rich families. He studied their children, their living conditions, and their moral values. He became familiar with all the merits and feelings of each class, understood the reasons behind the nation’s contemporary situation, its imperfections, its needs and weaknesses. He witnessed ignorant people posing as scholars, workers pretending to be masters, adulterers feigning piety and

innocence, and too many performing ablutions publicly but not praying in private. He witnessed the vain arrogance of people who had inherited their property from their fathers and forefathers, others who could not write after twenty years of studies, who knew nothing yet imagined themselves as Plato. Such was the majority of society, and faced with this painful reality, he nearly lost all hope. But because of his sharp eye and love for his people, he saw that the nation was still alive. If the darkness were removed from the conscience of society, and if the dry skin that covered its body like scabies were cleaned off, he was convinced that the true spirit of the nation would emerge healthy and augment its strength.”⁵

His year of exploring what he called his “nation” revealed both how near dead and useless it appeared to him, but also how it possessed enough life to become something different and better. “What to do, with what to begin, how to inspire the dead-end souls, how to raise up the veils that covered the eyes and hearts of his people, and how to lift a whole nation that was sprawling in the desert of ignorance. Nearly all of his time was spent with these questions:”⁶

“On the one hand, the nation remained uninformed, on the other, it was astonished at changes in the world, was unaware of what was what and had difficulties finding ways to sustain itself. When crossing paths with members of the clerisy, ordinary people had to provide them with money; when encountering political figures, they had to kiss hands. This was all they knew. In short, the nation’s consciousness was covered with a fog, leaving it far from the entire world and its progress. Its body

5 “The New Day has Come,” p. 21.

6 “The New Day has Come,” pp. 21-22.

was like a living corpse. There were no national goals, no claims for society, no public opinion. Everyone was immersed in the dream of unawareness, and was snoring loudly.

On seeing this situation [his] heart was crying blood and his mind was dizzy with myriad thoughts and actions as if preparing to explode. What should he do? If the nation is sleeping, how might he wake it up? How could one cure an ill nation? If it is wounded, how can one bind the wounds? If it was enchanted, how might one break the spell and restore its soul and body?"⁷

As a young man, Ismail Bey frequently heard the widespread opinion that the time of every Muslim nation had passed and that each was essentially dead. He hated this and did not share it. Instead, he judged the words of others seriously and with a critical eye, and delved deeply into history, ethnography, and economics. "From all of this he concluded that his nation was alive and only in a deep sleep. He was absolutely sure that if it woke up and rose to its feet, it would follow the path of progress undertaken by other nations. Here lay the inner strength and focus that he possessed."⁸ It was a point of view that lasted his life and found expression not only in his writings but also in his activities; it also reflects why he became the most influential architect of modernism among the Turkic subjects of the Russian Empire.

7 "The New Day has Come," pp. 24.

8 "The New Day has Come" pp. 24. See *Molla Nasreddin* cartoon below emphasizing the need to awaken the Islamic world from deep slumber.

Later in his life, at age fifty in 1901, Gaspirah wrote an essay entitled “First Steps Toward Civilizing Russia’s Muslims.”⁹ To this essay he appended a list of more than two hundred texts of diverse contents as “must reads” for his people as they seek to become modern. Among them was a translation into Turkic (1889) of portions of Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* (henceforth RC). Why would this story of a man, an island, and a cannibal find its way into a world as different from Defoe’s as might be imagined? Why might Mr. Crusoe’s story, his experiences, and his meditations on solitude, the cannibal “other,” and himself be perceived as useful for Tatar entertainment or musings? The answers to these and similar questions remain elusive, but a few possibilities are worth mentioning: (1) Defoe had written much about confessional and ideological conflict, but in RC he produced a text designed to go beyond those issues; (2) Defoe embodied Robinson as a character who can become a point of identification for all those otherwise caught up in the conflicts above; (3) Robinson does not represent any particular point of view or virtue, but does possess one in particular—perseverance; (4) Defoe places his hero on a trajectory that ultimately comes down on the side of freedom, self-creation, and social needs as opposed to tradition, honor, and social norms; (5) Robinson seeks to relinquish himself from group pathologies in an effort to transform society so that it can become a source of affirmation of individual self-realization rather than primarily one of social constraint; and (6) as for the cannibals, Defoe humanizes them, makes them sympathetic, thereby collapsing the distance between “us” and “them.”

9 *Mebadi-yi temeddun-ii Islamiyan-i Rus*. Appeared initially as a supplement to his newspaper *Tercuman*, but not included as part of *Perevodchik*. It was translated from Turkic to English by Edward J. Lazzerini as “Gadidism at the Turn of the Twentieth Century: a View from Within” and published in *Cahiers du monde russe etsovietique*, 16:2 (April-June 1975), 245-277.

In the final third of the novel, which is the portion published by Gaspirali's press, Robinson offers a straightforward call for religious toleration that Defoe uses to formulate the simplest truths as an alternative to endless theological arguments that have consumed humankind for too long in the shaping of social policy. Like Defoe, Gaspirali seeks to create a tension between two antagonistic life ways. The first, with a number of historical and current cultural expressions, is committed to what may be termed **manuscript traditions** and their insistence upon a hermeneutics of harmony between the intellect and the spirit. The second, with an arguably single current expression with minor cultural variations that we describe as **modernity**, rejects the possibility of such harmony and, whatever it is or is becoming, represents the dislocation of rationality from the transcendent and its embodiment in society.

Across Eurasia, manuscript traditions—abstract theology and philosophy—have accompanied the evolution of human societies along the trajectory known as civilization beginning in the mid-first millennium BCE and continuing into early modern times. Invariably they pursue a generalized quest for order (cosmos) that makes them seem unchanging once they become fully articulated. Ritualization of credos and practice over time, and the perennial drift toward orthodoxy, conformism, and communalism, encourage such traditions to resist heterodoxy, innovation, freethinking, and individualism. Yet, manuscript traditions are not handed on passively, but are steadily transformed by transmittal and commentarial processes, repeated over many centuries. Some of these processes are dissipative or entropic—including textual losses, linguistic drift, and scribal errors—that drain unique information out of these traditions. Others, commentarial or scholastic, pump stereotypical information into them. Generations of commentators are stimulated by the challenge of reconciling stratified textual canons and freeing “authoritative” texts from internal contradictions. With the passage of sufficient time, these

processes create elaborate correlative systems in which every part of reality in some way mirrors, or is expected to mirror, every other.

One of these manuscript traditions is rooted in the canon—the Qur'an and *sunnah*—of the religion named Islam (submission), but which is more properly *Din* (faith, religion, behavior). As for modernity, economies, societies, and cultures are fundamentally about unremitting and incessant change. In a memorable image—"all that is solid melts into air"—Marx and Engels pronounced an ironic impermanence upon a world already thoroughly enabled and constrained by technology. The condition of modernity—now visible all around, from the birthing of babies to dying, and in every human experience in between—has for more than a century taxed the human spirit everywhere and exercised the minds of more than a few philosophers, commentators, and critics who have sought to identify its causes, trajectory, and meanings.

So it has been with *jadidism*. Like Defoe, Gaspirali sees the modern world as emanating from the Enlightenment, as the most influential touchstone for modernity, with whose affinity for rationality and social progress are also associated secularization and the release of the individual from the bonds of manuscript traditions. Gaspirali, like Defoe, was sensitive to the infinite vagaries of human behavior, individually and collectively; the non-linear dynamics of that behavior, and its overriding randomness; and the pseudo synchronicity that we construct for history in order to satisfy some deeply genetic expectation.

Afterthought

If I may, I would like to extend this essay briefly with the following unusual comparison that offers another way to examine what moved Gaspirali throughout his life: In the opening canto of his fourteenth-century masterpiece, *Divina Commedia*, the Italian Renaissance poet, Dante Alighieri (1265-1321), recalls the tension between the worldly and the

spiritual that eternally plagues humanity, and announces his intention to relate his own journey from desolation and despair to the pinnacle of joy. In seven opening lines, he defines for all generations the terror of losing one's way, a terror that many others have articulated across centuries and cultures:

“Midway in our **life's journey**, I **went astray**
 from **the straight road** and woke to find myself
alone in a **dark wood**. How shall I say
 what wood that was! I never saw so **drear**,
 so **rank**, so **arduous** a **wilderness**!
 Its very memory gives a shape to **fear**.
Death could scarce be more **bitter** than that place!”
 [My emphases]

For his journey, he is guided by two figures: Virgil, the long-deceased Latin poet who represents human reason, and Beatrice, who symbolizes divine love. Virgil can accompany Dante only so far, however, because human reason is self-limited. Arguably more problematic is the “reality” that human reason can never achieve its purpose and that, in the end, it must be Beatrice alone who can help Dante experience that which he seeks most: certainty.

Far from Dante's world in space and time, and his own yearnings, is a dystopian satire published by the German writer Alexander Moszkowski in 1922 entitled *Die Inseln der Weisheit* (*The Isles of Wisdom*). The author imagines travels to a set of islands that together form an archipelago of many small landmasses, each of which subscribes to a philosophical school of thought. From one island to the next, an absurd utopia dominates by eliminating life's variety and emotions that would make it enjoyable. The first visited is a Platonic Island, followed by the Island of Happy Conditions, the Island of Perversions, the Mechanized Island, the Reactionary Island, and the Island of Fine Arts. At this point, the tourists chose a group of smaller islands with which to complete their cruise. One was an Island of Skeptics on which climatically and intellectually all lived in an atmosphere of fog.



Two representatives of the old Islamic elite of Azerbaijan prepare to block the oncoming train whose engine bears the title *Usul-i Jadid*, or New Method. [Molla Nasreddin, No. 2 (1909)]

These Skeptics are collectively obsessed with the idea that humans cannot know anything with certainty, and have expressed doubts as to their own existence. According to their philosophy, doubt is the sovereign of thought, a belief ensuring that skepticism, argument, and uncertainty are instilled into everything. As the author notes, “it is a waste of time to confront them with proofs.” All the people on the island are happy and content.

Neither Dante nor the Skeptics were or are Muslims. What surely does matter are the ways the two define the nature, origin, and scope of knowledge (their respective epistemologies).



Holding copies of his book *Hoca-yi Sibyan* (Teacher of Children) and an issue of *Tercuman*, Gaspirah is assaulted by two mullahs waving signs declaring “Usul-i jadid hilaf shariat’i” (“The New Method is a Threat to Shari’a”) and “Takfir” (Apostate) [*Molla Nasreddin*, No. 17 (1908)]

The first strives to know from reason, but is frustrated by its limits and finds comfort in its ultimate rejection (faith). The second defiantly denies that knowledge can be derived from anything other than reason. The two are, quite literally, worlds apart owing to the irreducible distance between their epistemologies. Thus, we might say, Dante is sublimely pre-modern, while the animated Skeptics are modernists to a fault.

In the two cartoons above, we see the inevitable conflict between religion and modernity. Recognizing that both were published in a journal that supports the latter, it is not surprising that in each we see the clerics acting quite belligerent

and threatening toward anything or anyone representing *usul-i jadid*. As with Dante and the Skeptics, the conflict is inevitable and protracted. The question is whether they can coexist, and whether the imponderable decisions of God can be weighed by the scales of reason. Being anti-religion, the Skeptics (and Gaspirah in a social sense) appear to have little to lose, but being pro-religion, the Dantes and more recent defenders of faith are the real losers, as the prominent Lebanese Islamist, Muhammad Rashid Rida (1865-1935), described in 1931:¹⁰

“In a time that is **afflicted** by ideological, intellectual, political, Communist, and Bolshevik **upheavals**; in a time that is **strained** by religious, literary, and social **chaos**; in a time that is threatened by women’s **revolution**, the **violation** of marital vows, the **disintegration** of the family, and the bonds of kinship; in a time in which **heresy** and unfettered **promiscuity** have **erupted** as well as **attacks** on the nation’s religion, language, and values, and its customs, dress, and origins, **nothing remains stable** to raise our youth and teach them respect. In such a time, which I have described briefly, and which you know even better, the concepts of renewal, renewing, and renewers [the means by which to save Islam] have become widely spread among us. Truly, we are in a **dire need** for renewal and renewers. Anything that could **preserve** our national character and religious heritage, and promote us in the paths of civic advancement has been **revoked** and **corroded**. We have **worn out** and **depreciated**, even have **abandoned** and **forgotten** all of our historical origins, true religion, blossoming civilization, and great

10 Muhammad Rashid Rida, “al-Tajdid wa al-tajaddud wa al-mujaddidun [Renewal, Renewing, and Renewers],” *al-Manar*, 31, No. 10 (July 1931), 770. Rashid Rida was a highly trained Islamic scholar and theologian with strict scripturalist leanings. These led him to become increasingly conservative in his later years and an opponent of European imperial powers and Western ideas. His enmity reached the point of supporting armed *jihad* (rebellion) to expel European influences in order to reestablish Islamic fundamentalism and renew religious heritage.

empire. In our attempts to **acquire the novel** and **borrow the modern** we have only **clung to the fringes** and have never been able to reproduce it fully. What we have of the old and the modern is a **shell of imitation**, like the shell of an almond or a walnut that lies under the outer wooden layer; **it is useless in itself** and **cannot preserve the core.**" [My emphases]

As a younger man in the nineteenth century, Rashid Rida felt less antagonistic toward intellectuals such as Gaspirali, whom he knew of and recognized more as a renewer than a significant disrupter of the faith they shared. He also felt much less threatened by calls for modernity. With the passage of time, however, Ismail Bey would pass away in 1914, the very year that gave much of humanity World War One and opened the twentieth century to ever more global changes and disruptions of traditional forces. Attitudes involving modernity, deeply rooted in these matters, had grown to become much more politicized and more dangerous to those like Rashid Rida by 1931.

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Acknowledgements

Sharon Carson

The spark for this project occurred during a 2014 visit to the Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar Literature Museum Library in Istanbul, when I asked my colleague and friend Çiğdem Pala Mull about a display case featuring Ismail Gaspıralı. We had long shared an interest in 19th century utopian literature and imagination, having worked together at the University of North Dakota on Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*. I did not know of Gaspıralı's life and work then, and Çiğdem mentioned that among many other labors, Gaspıralı had written several versions of a literary utopia called *Darırrahat Müslümanları* (Muslims of the Peaceful Country). I asked if any of this work had been translated into English, and Çiğdem replied that it had not been, but it was an intriguing aspect of Gaspıralı's remarkable work. We wandered off to explore other parts of the library.

Fast forward to many months later: I was back at work at the University of North Dakota, and Çiğdem back at work in Muğla, Türkiye as Chair of the Department of Western Languages and Literatures at Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University. Çiğdem sent an email saying that she had a surprise for me: her own English translation of the 1890's serialized version of *The Muslims of Darırrarhat*, which Gaspıralı had published in his newspaper *Tercüman*.

I was and remain, deeply grateful for such a generous and generative gift.

Çiğdem's long labor to translate the full text of the *Tercüman* version of the story is a gift not only to me but to any reader of English who wishes access to this intriguing 19th century work of literary utopian imagination.

I'd like to personally thank Çiğdem Pala Mull for persisting with this project through the disruptions and fatigue of the long pandemic. I'd also like to thank my friend and colleague Javid Aliyev of Yeni Yüzyıl Üniversitesi, who was also with us at the Tanpınar Library and Museum that day in Istanbul, and with whom I have since shared much animated dialogue about comparative literary studies. Warm thanks to Ed Lazzerini for offering his reflective essay included in this volume. We are grateful to artist Lucy Ganje for her wonderful cover design. And last but not least, special thanks to my UND colleague and *NDQ* editor Bill Caraher for his long patience with pandemic delays and also for his trust in the value of percolation.

Çiğdem Pala Mull

This project started, as Sharon recalled, with our mutual interest in 19th century utopian literature, specifically Edward Bellamy's utopian novel *Looking Backward*. Since utopian imagination has long been associated with the west, I always wondered about the eastern examples of the genre and, in my research, I ran into Sadık Usta's book called *Turkish Utopias: Utopia and Revolution from Tanzimat to the Republic*. This was a publication of his thesis done at Goethe University. The book also contained full versions of some of the Turkish utopias of the period. When I first read İsmail Gaspıralı's *The Muslims of Dariürrahat*, I was very excited about sharing it with Sharon. Since I couldn't locate any translation of this text, I decided to translate it as a gift for her. The source text is taken from Usta's book and it is the Turkish translation of the 1890 text which was the serialized version of *The Muslims of Dariürrahat* which Gaspıralı had published in his newspaper *Tercüman*. He later published it as a book in 1906 based on the serialized version of the text. The Turkish text that I

translated was initially translated from Ottoman to Turkish by Hüseyin Gültekin. Excerpts of this translation of *The Muslims of Dariürrahat* were published in the *Transnational* issue of *North Dakota Quarterly* in 2017 with my introductory notes and a summary. This time the readers will be able to read the complete text locating it in the long tradition of utopias and read it in a comparative, transnational context.

While translating Gaspıralı's text, it was a delightful surprise to run into some words that brought distant memories of my childhood. Since my maternal grandparents are Crimean Tatars that immigrated from Crimea to Rumania, and finally to Türkiye, this gift I wanted to give to my mentor and my colleague also became a joy and a gift to myself that presented me the opportunity to reconnect with my roots.

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Sharon Carson, named Chester Fritz Distinguished Professor at the University of North Dakota in 2015, teaches American literature and comparative religions and literature. She also works in public humanities and narrative journalism. Her research and teaching have included cross-national work with colleagues in Turkey and she has been a visiting scholar with the International Research Training Group-Diversity (IRTG-Diversity) in Germany. Her current projects include comparative studies of early nineteenth-century Black American and German writers, as well as research for a book project on nineteenth and twentieth-century American literary journalism.

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