



OBSERVATIONS ON THE ACTIVITIES OF ISMAIL GASPRINSKY

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ABSTRACT

This article focuses on the biography, scholarly and literary activities of I. Gasprinsky, the leader of the Jadid movement. It also examines his role in the Turkestan Jadid movement, his interactions with Behbudiy and Chulpon, and his ideas on a common Turkic literary language.

Introduction. Gasprinsky (pen name; full name: Ismail Gasprali, 1851 - 1914) was a political and public figure, writer, translator, enlightened teacher, publisher, dissident, and a prominent ideological leader in the Muslim and Turkic world. He was the founder of the newspaper “Tarjimon” and the “Usuli jaded” education system. A unique scholar who advocated for the unity of the Turkic world, speaking a single Turkic language, writing in a unified Turkic literary language, and promoted the slogan “unity in language, thought, and action”.

Uzbek scholar, Prof. B. Qosimov refers to I. Gasprinsky as the “Third Teacher”, which is a great and accurate assessment of this prominent enlightener: “The Ancient East recognized Aristotle as the “First Teacher”. Al-Farabi, who initiated the Central Asian Renaissance, entered history as the “Second Teacher”. As time passed, after four to five centuries of stagnation and captivity, the process of self-awareness in the Turkic world began. Experts call this a “national awakening”. It also has a second name – “Jadidism”. It was Ismail Gasprinskiy (Gasprali) who raised and nurtured a class of progressive intellectuals at the forefront of the Turkic peoples’ awakening, as they experienced the oppression of Russian colonialism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Therefore, it would not be an exaggeration to call him the “Third Teacher”.

The French magazine “Revue du monde musulman” reported in its time (1910) that I. Gasprinsky was nominated for the “International Nobel Peace Prize” in recognition of his contributions to history, the Muslim and Turkic worlds, and humanity as a whole.

I. Gasprinsky is also considered the spiritual leader and ideologue of Turkestan Jadidism. The leader of Uzbek Jadidism, M. Behbudiy, wrote about his mentor I. Gasprinsky: “In a very short historical period, he managed to unite all the Turkic and Tatar peoples of Russia into a single national family through goodwill”.



I. Gasprinsky was born on March 21, 1851, in the hunting village of Ajikoy near Bakhchisaray. His pen name Gasprali or Gasprinsky comes from the nearby village of Gaspra, where his ancestors were from. He is more widely known in the world under the name "Gasprinsky". His father, Mustafobek, worked as a translator for a Russian prince and later rose to the rank of nobleman. At the beginning of the Crimean War (1853), Gasprinsky's family moved to Bakhchisaray. Young Ismailbek grew up under the care of his mother Fatima and nanny Habiba. He first studied at an old-style school, then at a gymnasium, and later at a military educational institution. At the age of 13, he transferred to a gymnasium in Moscow. After completing his studies there, he returned to Bakhchisaray and studied at the Simferopol Men's Gymnasium, where he became a Russian language teacher and taught at the madrasa. In 1871, he went to France to continue his studies. In Paris, he met the Russian writer I. Turgenev and worked under him as an assistant secretary. He learned French and even worked as a translator in certain offices. At the same time, he studied at the Sorbonne University. He traveled to Spain and Turkey, staying for a long time at his uncle's house in Istanbul. Finally, in 1876, he returned to Bakhchisaray. He stayed for a long time at his uncle's house in Istanbul.

As a result of this, I. Gasprinsky realized that the Turkic lands had fallen behind the world's advanced countries to an unprecedented degree. Consequently, I. Gasprinsky began his work by formulating a plan to elevate his country, along with the Turkic and Muslim world, to the ranks of advanced nations. The first step was to reform education. However, on this path, he encountered great resistance and was even forced to change his activities for a certain period. As the city governor, he participated in the improvement of the city of Bakhchisaray (1878-1884).

Gasprinsky understood the importance of the press and journalism in promoting his ideas very early, and on April 10, 1883, he published the first issue of the famous newspaper "Tarjimon". In different years, he also founded various newspapers and magazines under the names "Xotin", "E'lon varaqasi", "Alami nisvon" ("Ayol olami"), "Tarbiya", "Millat".

Through the newspaper "Tarjimon", I. Gasprinsky's ideas spread throughout the Crimean, Ural, Khiva, Bukhara, and Kokand Khanates. The newspaper itself was distributed in these places, as well as in Iran, China, Turkey, Egypt, France, Bulgaria, the USA, Switzerland, and other European countries. Dozens of publications around the world utilized the materials from "Tarjimon": "Zamon", "Saboh", "Iqdam", "G'ayrat", "Diqqat", "Xidmat", "Qair", "Nil", "Axtar", "Vatan". Additionally, in 1906, I. Gasprinskiy obtained permission to publish a humorous magazine titled "Ha-ha-ha".

In 1907-1908, I. Gasprinsky published several issues of the newspaper "An-Nahda" ("Awakening") in Egypt. Additionally, in 1884, he established the first "usuli jadid" school under the "Tarjimon" newspaper (in Bakhchisaray) and wrote about the pedagogical activities conducted in this school. This is why it is said that the Jadid movement was born, spread, and gained strength in the Turkic world thanks to I. Gasprinsky.

The Turkestanian innovators (jadids) also regarded I. Gasprinsky as their spiritual father and leader. Academician N. Karimov, who thoroughly and comprehensively studied the Jadid period, writes in his substantial research book "Literary Landscapes of the 20th Century": "Through his newspaper ("Tarjimon" is meant - U.H.), Ismail Gasprinsky not only paved the



way for the arrival of new era ideas in Turkestan but also visited Samarkand and Bukhara himself in 1893, meeting prominent figures of the nation such as M. Behbudi and A. Shakuri. He even opened a Jadid school in Bukhara. Gradually, Jadid schools began to be established in cities such as Samarkand, Kokand, Tashkent, and Andijan. Although few in number, the first Jadids emerged”.

It is evident that the emergence and progression of Jadidism in Turkestan, in addition to the general atmosphere and environment, can be directly attributed to the contributions of I. Gasprinsky.

In the emergence of Jadidism in Turkestan, along with the socio-historical conditions and the work of Uzbek enlighteners, a third factor played an important role - the press and journalism, which promoted new, progressive ideas. Journalism is primarily associated with the name of I. Gasprinsky. Gasprinsky's influence on Turkestan and its progressive intellectuals was so profound that when he died (September 10, 1914), his followers expressed their grief in passionate words: Behbudiy wrote an article, while Avloniy, Ayniy, Siddiqiy Ajziy, Tavallo, and Cholpon composed poems. In his article “Ismoilbek hazralari” (“Oyina”, October 4, 1914), Behbudiy states: “There has never been such a person among Russian Muslims”. Hamza wrote an article titled “Yavmul-vafot” (“Sadoyi Farg’ona”, September 24, 1914) and a poem titled “Marsiya” (“Sadoyi Farg’ona”, September 28, 1914). In his poem, addressing the nation, he figuratively expresses his grief by saying that the Messiah ascended to the sky, and bodies were separated from souls:

Oh, millat, yetdi bu dam qayg’ulik, g’amlik zamon,
Tegdi og’zingga halokat toshi, emdi to’la qon,
Dod qil davri falakdan, botdi xurshidi jahon,
Motam ayla, og’lasun ahvolinga har insu jon,
Ko’k sari uchdi Masiho jismlar jondan judo,
Ya’ni takrori taraqqiy murg’i shabxondan judo.

A prominent researcher of the Jadid era, S. Ahmad, in his book “Mahmudxo'ja Behbudiy”, provides the following information about I. Gasprinsky's relationship with his followers from Turkestan: “When and where he first met the great teacher, the awakener of the Turkic world from ignorance, the great reformer Ismailbek Gasprali (referring to M. Behbudiy - U.H.) is still unknown. Ismail Gasprali first visited Tashkent and Samarkand in 1893. He met with Abdulg’ani Husainov, a millionaire who had settled permanently in Samarkand from Tatarstan, and stayed at his house. This man said that he had heard about a new method of schooling and that he would establish such a school in Samarkand, and asked Gasprali for help. Gasprali left his companion, Majid G’anizoda, at the school opened by Husainov. Majid G’anizoda taught the children for 40 days and demonstrated the advantages of the new method. However, by the governor's order, this school was closed. Who else Ismail Gasprali met during this period remains unclear”.

Later, I. Gasprinsky also met with Behbudi, the father of Turkestan Jadidism, several times, engaging in lengthy conversations, offering advice and guidance. One such meeting took place in 1907 in Nizhny Novgorod. From Behbudi's words written in 1908, it is known that I. Gasprinsky had also visited Samarkand in 1901: “Seven years ago, the esteemed master came



to Samarkand and was a guest of teacher Shakuri and myself". I. Gasprinsky left a significant scientific, literary, and journalistic legacy. Even during his lifetime, the author himself actively worked to disseminate his works among Turkic and all Muslim peoples. I. Gasprinsky authored socio-educational treatises such as *"Ovrupa madaniyatiga betarafona bir nazar"*, *"Madaniyati islomiya" kabi ijimoiy-ma'rifiy risolalar*, *"Mukolamai salotin" (Sultonlar suhbat)*, *"Farangiston maktublari"*, *"Dorur-Rohat musulmonlari"*, *"Xotinlar o'lkasi" kabi badiiy asarlar muallifidir. Uning o'zi tashkil etgan "Tarjimon" gazetasida "Milliyat", "Ziyoli sinfimiz", "Rusiya Turkistoni", "Totorcha qizil tovush", "Xonlarga xitob", "Bizning matbuot", "Taraqiy", "Samarqandda asari najot", "Til va lison yili"* written in response to young Chulpon, is of particular importance. It provides appropriate and crucial recommendations about the correct attitude towards the old and the new, uniquely reflecting the essence of Jadidism.

The numerous works of I. Gasprinsky and all his endeavors in the path of enlightenment are of unparalleled importance as they are aimed at the advancement of Turkic peoples and even the entire Islamic world.

I. Gasprinsky's contributions in various fields, including his views and activities in the realm of language, are of great significance. He put forward the idea of a common literary Turkic language. He realized very early on that without forming a common language among Turkic peoples, uniting them would be difficult, if not impossible. Based on this understanding, I. Gasprinsky proposed a solution - a common literary language comprehensible to all: "There are three things that separate people from one another. One is distance, one is religious difference, and one is lack of language knowledge. Even though our religion is always the same, we are separated by distance and inability to understand each other's language. Despite the fact that in this era of civilization, distances are shrinking year by year due to steamships, railways, and telegraphs, the reason for our fragmentation is becoming more evident day by day. The main reason is the absence of a common language, that is, we do not have a shared literary language".

The absence of a common Turkic literary language and a common Turkic alphabet has become even more evident today as one of the main factors separating Turkic peoples from one another. In the past, due to the use of a single Arabic alphabet, the works of Alisher Navoi were read and understood by almost all Turkic peoples. For this reason, in the 20th century, A. Qodiriy's *"Days Gone By"* and Chulpon's poems were also read and understood without difficulty. Today, given the historical and political situation, there is a need to introduce a single common Turkic alphabet based on the Latin script, and it is gratifying that specific work has been done in this direction, with such an alphabet being proposed (2024). It should be noted that in the modern era, ideological leaders like I. Gasprinsky are at the forefront of this idea, serving the unification of Turkic peoples and the Islamic world.

Conclusion. I. Gasprinsky's courageous and wise personality is also evident from his deathbed testament. Academician N. Karimov, in his article *"Star of the Turkic World"*, quotes I. Gasprinsky's will verbatim: "I have been feeling unwell since yesterday. The outcome of this condition will be known in the coming days. Having been born into this world, we will all certainly die one day... Do not be saddened by my words... Just as being born in this world is natural, so too is dying... We will see what is written on our foreheads. I will tell you my will... *"Tarjimon"* should not be divided, hopefully it will never be divided. Let my children work



there and live off the profits they receive. I hope my sons will never allow “Tarjimon” to fade away”.

This testament leaves the impression of being addressed not only to his own children but to all Turkic peoples and their future generations. Indeed, I. Gasprinsky’s passionate and great lifelong work provides ample grounds and justification to make such a statement..

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