

3 The Sacred School

A month or so had passed since he had fled school in fear of the gym master. His mother constantly worried and fretted because he did not join in with the other students as she had hoped. She had great ambitions for him that depended entirely on his success at the primary school, after which he would travel to Cairo, where he would stay at his uncle's and complete his education, thereby realizing the great hopes she had placed in her small child. His older brother (he was actually only his half-brother) constantly taunted him for having run away from school. The child resented this taunting and so dared to do something that he had never done before or since, something his family training totally rejected. He threw the cover of a jar at him and ran. On the other hand, his father did not direct a single word to him, and this was worse than his brother's taunts.

In the end, he found that he had to return to school, but this time without fuss and ceremony or any particular preparation. One morning he simply found himself rising and putting on his uniform. He then made his way to the house of his aunt and called her son and told him he was going to school with him that day.

He was welcomed there by the *'arif* and by the *faqih* (who was called the headmaster) and asked the reason for his absence. Now he realized that his secret had been weighing on him, and he unburdened himself to the teacher, telling him that he was afraid of the gym master. The headmaster was a wise man who proceeded to reassure him on this score until he really felt confident. And so the child realized that he was safe from the danger of this sick devil. He would learn the physical exercises and procedures and, because he was yet small, would be given a long period in which to perfect them. Then—and this is most important—the headmaster would make sure that the gym master would treat him well when he came.

The incubus was lifted from his chest. Upon his return home in the afternoon, they all ceased to worry about him. When he informed his mother about what had happened, she rejoiced in all her being and drew him to her breast in a torrent of emotion. She awaited the arrival of his father to inform him of the happy news. Upon hearing it, his father smiled inside, although outwardly he pretended not to make much of it. He replied to her jokingly: "Spare us, oh, woman, you and your son!"

The school was made up of three interconnected rooms. Along the whole front of it was the schoolyard with the exit gate. There were five grades of students distributed in the rooms in the following manner: The fourth grade, containing the older students, including those aged twenty or more, along with the third grade, whose students were a little younger, were instructed by the headmaster of the school. The other teacher taught the first and second grades in a second room. The kindergarten met in a separate room. And who looked after their education but Ibrahim, the school janitor. Yes! He would finish his job sweeping the school and then fill the pitcher from which the students drank, drawing the water from two big clay pots located within a wooden closet. He would wipe off the slates and distribute chalk to the classrooms and then switch to a teaching role to take care of the young ones in the kindergarten! This alone was enough to put the child off from staying in the kindergarten. What is more, his cousin was in the fourth year. He expressed his desire to relocate to the headmaster, and after negotiations involving the *'arif* it was agreed that the child should be in one of the grades—first or second—that the *'arif* taught, though in fact he sometimes went to the fourth-year room to sit beside his cousin. Whenever the inspector came to the school, however, he had to return to the kindergarten and remain there until the inspector had left.

The *'arif* and the headmaster treated him very well. This was hardly surprising, for every morning the child would bring for them quantities of sugar and tea, which he carried in his pockets. They would entrust these to Ibrahim, who would use them to prepare refreshments during recess and after lunch. Furthermore, his father visited regularly. For all these reasons, the teachers gave him individual attention in class. They wrote the letters of the alphabet, then words, and then sentences on the slate board and left him to copy them. Each day he made progress. In common with a very small number of other students from the village's wealthy families, he received what virtually amounted to special lessons. At the end of the year he was qualified to move on and take a seat in the first year, where he now belonged. He was now accustomed to the school environment and had begun to be a real student.



The school took a step forward the following year. A second teacher was appointed. Ibrahim, consequently, was released from his teaching duties, although he continued with his janitorial work. The schedules were changed: The two teachers and the headmaster now alternated among the three classrooms composed of the five grades. Furthermore, the kindergarten was placed in the same room as the first grade, while the second and third grades were placed in another room. The fourth grade was in a room by itself, where also was found the principal's cabinet, which contained the students' supplies, including erasers, pens, books, and notepads.

But in the year that followed—when the child had passed into the second grade—a big disturbance convulsed the village. The provincial council now had a large number of *fuqaha* trained as teachers and so it seemed obvious that they should put one of them in place of the *shaykh* who was a Qur'an reciter and *kuttab* master but did not have a teaching certificate and knew nothing of arithmetic or any other modern subject. When this step was taken, rumors flooded through the village and shook it to its core. "The government wants to obliterate the Qur'an by neglecting its memorization in the schools!" Was there any better proof of this than the removal of Shaykh Ahmad, who recited the Qur'an and whose presence gave them the confidence to send their children there? The rumors spread like wildfire. Naturally, the *shaykh* fanned the flames in an attempt to gain revenge against the school and to promote the *kuttab*, where he

the teachers and the school's headmaster—here *shaykhs* counted as *effendis*. The students and other villagers called them *effendis* to distinguish them from the *shaykhs* of the village, whose mark of distinction was that they had memorized the Qur'an. The *effendis* had clean clothes and their salaries were drawn from the provincial council, rather than from the children's weekly tithe that came each Thursday. There were also the chairs and book receptacles and especially the implements that were supplied to them each year, including four notebooks and four manufactured pens. The boys at the *kuttab*, in contrast, wrote on a tin slate with ordinary reed pens. The students at the school received blotting paper to dry their notebooks. In contrast, the boys at the *kuttab* used dirt to dry their slates. They spit on them and rubbed them with their sleeve, or sometimes licked them with their tongues.

There were many other things that made them proud. But nothing compared to the sign that was mounted on top of the gate of the school. This was something unique to the school, and there was nothing like it in the entire village. It had been brought from the provincial capital.⁴ The story of this sign actually relates to the following year, by which time the boy had passed into the third grade. The council had an abundance of graduates of the teaching schools that were part of its new system, two of which were then appointed to the school. One of them replaced the old headmaster, who transferred to another village, while the other came as a teacher. At that time there was only one *'arif* left at the school, and he also was transferred a month later. As a result, the school was raised up to another level, as it now met all of the requirements of a government school. The older students, or, more precisely, those who were now men with moustaches, were weeded out and the kindergarten was abolished. The school was divided into four properly ordered sections.

The new headmaster decided to implement a major change, proposing to put up a sign with the name of the school, just like the schools of the provincial capital. After announcing that the sign was going to cost twenty-five piastres,⁵ he suggested that the students should contribute anything they could. The plan excited our boy, for the sign would be another point of pride for the school in its competition with the students of the *kuttab*. And so when some of the students began to bring one or two milliemes, and the sons of the wealthy were donating half a piastre or, in rare cases, an entire piastre, he was doing his best at home to bring in fifty milliemes.

When the sign was finally completed in the provincial capital and then hung over the gate of the school, he was overcome with happiness.



By the end of his fourth year he was doing well in his memorization of the Qur'an, and this was a great miracle for the school, which silenced the tongues and deceitful propaganda of the supporters and youth of the *katatib*. He completed his studies at the school when he was still a child of about ten years. But he had companions who had first completed the memorization of the Qur'an at the *kuttab* and then had entered the school. As a result, they were over fifteen years of age by the time they entered the fourth year. Three of these were able at the end of that year to proceed to the primary teachers' college in the provincial capital. This was a new event in the village, and it had a profound impact upon him. In a few years these three would become *effendis*, like the *effendis* of the school under whom they had studied.

He wished he could blink his eyes and find that he was the same age as they and thus was accepted into the teachers' school. But what right did he have to such dreams? He harbored for these *effendis* a feeling that almost amounted to worship. In the first place, they were part of the "sacred school." In the second place, they knew things that he didn't know and they could do everything. They had a special kind of life whose true nature he could no more understand than he could that of ghosts or spirits.

Today, more than twenty-five years later when circumstances and conditions have changed, he recalls the time he was sent to their home in the village. This house had been donated by one of its owners for them to live in, in recognition of their merit. He recalls that one of them had forgotten his watch and had given him the key so that he could fetch it, for he was known at school for his honesty. He remembers that he entered the house respectfully and with apprehension. It was as though he were entering a holy *mihrab* or an enchanted place. He held his breath as he went up the steps, opened the door into the holy room, and grabbed the watch. He then locked the door and returned as though he were a "clever Hasan"⁶ who had come across an enchanted treasure. He wanted to enter the school to which they had been admitted, but his age stood in the way. Inevitably, he had to leave his own school and make a place for a newcomer.

How hard it was for him to leave this small "homeland" and to distance himself from his companions and schoolmates whom he loved and who loved him. And how difficult it was for the teachers at the school to give him up, for he was their first proof that the school could succeed at Qur'an memorization. So they found a way around the problem by registering his name in the fourth-year class as a newcomer a month after the start of the following year. In this manner he returned to his beloved school to spend another year between its walls, in addition to the other happy and beautiful years.

A quarter-century has passed, during which he traveled to Cairo, finished his higher studies, and worked in various positions. But today if he returns to the village he always heads for the holy school, and when he crosses the threshold he feels again the awe he felt in his school days and a humble reverence, and if he were asked his sweetest wishes, he would say that he wished he could again be a student in the sacred school, defending it from the *kuttab* and the *kuttab* boys. When he steps across the sacred threshold, dozens of marvelous and beloved pictures leap through his imagination and dance in his mind as if he were living them again.



He recalls those periods when the school used to be converted into a peninsula surrounded by water on three sides, with only the fourth side remaining as a way of access. This occurred during the time of Nile flood, when the land of the village was covered by water for two months every year in preparation for the year's agriculture. Because the school was located at the edge of the village beside the fields, the waters of the flood surrounded it during these two beautiful months, except for one path in.

The beauty of these two months was especially evident on Saturdays. The *effendis*, some of whom were from the provincial capital and some from the neighboring villages, would stay in the village during the week, go to see their families on Thursdays and Fridays, and then return on Saturday morning. For most of the year they would mount their donkeys at the appropriate time and arrive just before the school bell rang on Saturday morning. During the time of the flood, however, they would take skiffs and sailboats. These did not

keep to any schedule and usually did not arrive until almost ten o'clock, so that they would miss the first two classes. And on some beautiful Saturdays they might not arrive until noon!

On such occasions the students used to stand on the shore or go farther into the nearby streets of the village, or else jump and shout in the courtyard of the school. They would run in and out of the rooms without any hesitancy or restriction. They had a great time coming and going and climbing on top of the chairs and book receptacles and spying from the windows, which faced the floodwaters. Some were so daring as to take off their clothes and throw themselves into the water from the windows. They would swim and climb back in through the windows, where they found their clothes, although sometimes their companions took the opportunity to hide their clothes or take them away, forcing them to search about the school for them, naked, until they finally found them.

These humorous pranks would continue until a sailboat or skiff approached from across the floodwaters. They would fear that one of the *effendis* might be in this boat (each would each arrive in a different boat from their various locales). In the blink of an eye everyone would be in his chair, with either a Qur'an or a book in front of him. Order was reestablished and voices fell silent, except for the murmur of reading, which proved the strength of their concentration.

And so if one of the teachers were in the boat, it was all right. All of the students were in perfect order. But if the boat were empty, everything would start up again and the commotion would be even greater than before. They would return to jumping and leaping into the water from the windows and on to the ground of the courtyard. This was repeated every Saturday during the time of the flood. All of this took place in spite of the efforts of Our Master Abdullah.

Our Master Abdullah was the successor of Ibrahim, the janitor. He was one of the inhabitants of the village and had been appointed janitor of the school. Previously he had been an *'arif* in the *kuttab*. He was pleased to be at the school because the fixed salary of ninety piastres per month was better than the tithes that he had received from the students at the *kuttab*, which might not exceed five piastres per month. Although he now worked as a servant, he kept his old title, "Our Master" Abdullah.



The boy also remembers an incident involving one of the school inspectors. Although it was horrible at the time it now appears delightfully humorous. Two elderly inspectors used to visit the school: one of them was from the provincial council, the other from the Ministry of Education. The presence of either one of them was enough to dry the saliva in the throats of the children and instill fear in their hearts, not to mention turning the teachers and the school upside down, and casting a dark shadow and a suffocating atmosphere over everything. Of the two, the inspector from the ministry inspired the most fear.

He was a tall man with a dark complexion, harsh features, and piercing eyes. He seemed always to be angry at something, snarling and full of rage. As an inspector of the ministry, he inevitably assumed that his visit was of more importance than the visit of the other inspector. Therefore he would appear graver and more violent and rougher in his movements, words, and expressions than was necessary. The *jubba* and *quftan* that covered his tall body made him all the more awesome and terrifying. The teachers were terrified of him and their fear infected the students, so that the hours he spent at school seemed to be an eternity, and time slowed to a crawl.

As for the unforgettable event, it was as follows. Studies were progressing in a leisurely way, as usual. At the end of the year the weather was scorching hot and the students were lazy. The teacher's *jubba* burdened him, so he took it off and threw it over the back of the chair. His turban felt hot and heavy so he took it gently by the tassel so that it would not be mussed and flung it onto the book receptacle of his first student. He then sat on his chair in a relaxed position that allowed his *quftan* to open, the waistband dangling carelessly.

Meanwhile time passed by and the world was quiet. Everyone was dozing sweetly. All of a sudden, a tall and lofty figure jumped through the window and dropped into the classroom, and was among them in an instant. The students were frightened. The blood froze in their veins as they stared at this sudden apparition. They began to scream in fear. The teacher scrambled to his feet, grabbing his turban with one hand and trying unsuccessfully to put on his *jubba* with the other. The apparition opened his lips to display a grim smile. While he shook his head, his tongue uttered sarcastically: "*Mashallah, mashallah.*"⁷

What was going on?

It was the inspector. The inspector from the ministry had as usual been riding a donkey to get from the provincial capital to the village and had stopped under the window to listen. Then he had stood on the back of the donkey in order to reach up to the window to climb in, catching everyone by surprise. This was a novel way of inspecting!



There is another image that he is unable to forget:

The schools and their students experienced a continuing succession of headmasters and teachers on account of the usual yearly transfers. When he was in the fourth year an old *shaykh*, who had received his education at the Azhar and then had joined the provincial council, was appointed headmaster. The man was gray and balding except for a circle of hair that was completely revealed whenever he removed his turban. His baldness made him the laughing stock of the devilish students and the butt of their ridicule. One day these demons conspired against him. As he sat engrossed in correcting notebooks with the students gathered around him, they saw his turban rise gradually from his head and travel to the middle of the room. Then, suddenly, it dropped when the *shaykh* got up and roared in anger, while the students broke out laughing. Tears came to their eyes as they tried to stifle their guffaws. The game of fishhook and line had done its job on the poor *shaykh's* turban! Just as he had noticed the prank, the student had dropped the line and the turban suddenly fell.

This *shaykh* was infatuated with grammatical endings.⁸ The students were young and in primary school, but the *shaykh* did not care. He would call a student to write on the blackboard because his own handwriting was illegible, and would dictate verses of poetry to him and assign the students the task of putting on the endings. If they did not know them, well, bless him, he would make them memorize the

endings! It did not matter to the *shaykh* that the students did not understand anything about the profound technicalities of Arabic case endings. It was not unusual to hear a small student stammering out words such as the following: “*Watani* [my homeland] is the subject of a sentence and has a nominative ending that is understood but does not appear because its space is occupied by the first person possessive suffix,” or “*Idha* [if, when] is an adverb introducing future action which puts its protasis in the genitive and is itself accusative by virtue of its apodosis.”

In any case, the memories of the students were crowded with many such things. Days passed. Scholars and students of the Azhar would come to the village during the holidays. One of these scholars volunteered to give a lesson in the interpretation of the Qur’an to the people in one of the mosques of the village. This lesson consisted simply of the *shaykh* sitting with the illiterate villagers gathered around him and pulling out from his robes a fascicle of al-Zamakhshari’s commentary on the Qur’an,⁹ which he proceeded to read to them. He would clap his hands from time to time, saying: “Understood?” Some replied, “Understood.” Then he continued pouring into their ears everything in Zamakhshari that dealt with grammar, rhetoric, and interpretation, of which they knew nothing.

The boy attended these lessons so that he might become a man. One night the *shaykh* read the interpretation of the Sura of the Cave and recited the following: “This is what we sought for (*nabghi*). So they returned retracing their footsteps.” The boy was eager to show off the grammar that he had learned and had noticed that the word *nabghi* was shortened without evident justification. He raised his finger as he would at school and said: “Oh master *shaykh*, why did you shorten the word *nabghi* without a reason?” The *shaykh* raised his head without concern and proceeded to say as though he were still reading: “Sir, the ‘ya’ was deleted by discretion for ease of pronunciation.” He continued on without further ado and paid no more attention to the small boy.

The boy heard “by discretion for ease of pronunciation” and found that this was not in his field of understanding. He knew the ending for the conditional and the ending for the vocative. And he knew the deleted letters and the weak letters, but he was not capable of understanding the words “by discretion for ease of pronunciation.” Truly it was the knowledge of the Azhar, and here he was in the village. However much you know, someone knows more. Many years passed before the boy could understand “by discretion” and “for ease of pronunciation.”



He recalls other things that made a greater impression upon him. The school finally opened its doors to the girls in the village, so that they could study with the boys throughout the day, because the system of dividing the school day between boys and girls had not yet been devised for the villages. Some of the fathers agreed to send their daughters to the school—especially if they were small children not above the age of ten. There were only seven such girls in the entire school. Although they were no different from the other girls in the village, their presence at the school produced a strange atmosphere and diffused a particular aroma. This atmosphere was a mixture, on one hand, of sharp sensitivity and a hidden desire to speak with this strange sex in the school, and on the other hand, a naïve rustic timidity and a fear of punishment both at school and at home for overstepping the bounds.

But all of this did not prevent some of the boys, especially the older ones, from teasing the girls with words, some of which were distasteful as they were leaving the school, and with playful gestures and sounds. Of course, the purpose of these was to attract attention. In his case, his extreme shyness and his family training kept him far away from this kind of behavior. But this did not mean that he had less desire than others to attract attention. His way of accomplishing this was compatible with his upbringing. He put himself forward as the defender of the girls’ honor when they were attacked.

Moreover, he was surprised to win the battle without a struggle. One day he was at home when all of a sudden there were seven girls knocking at the door, asking to play with his little sister in the house. The fact that one of the girls was the sister of the wife of one of his uncles made this more socially acceptable. Also among them was her cousin and for this cousin he had a special feeling. With the former he was permitted to converse freely. With the latter, even though the fact of their distant relationship allowed them to converse, he was scared to death to talk to her and would avoid it with Sufi-like piety and out of a deep sense of shyness. In any case, he did not invite them to enter the house, nor was he even capable of doing so. But when they all arrived together in such a way, led by the first little girl, with the other acting enticingly shy, he felt in himself an elation that he had never felt before. He recognized that they were really interested in him, not his little sister. He sensed that the other girl felt that he was special, just as he felt she was, even though they did not exchange a word. These visits were repeated, though they were no more than brief encounters. Still, they left a trace in him that could not be erased.

This other girl was bronze-skinned and her face showed a special, indeed unique, character. By village standards she was not beautiful. She did not have a white complexion, her nose was not defined to the right proportions, and her mouth did not resemble the “Signet-ring of Solomon.” But she alone among the girls of the school, indeed of the whole village, looked beautiful in his eyes. For him, the secret of her beauty lay in her special character, even though at that time he did not understand that “special character.” When he left the village for Cairo, this face remained in his imagination and defined the ideal of beauty for him. So when he returned three years later, his life, culture, and worldview having changed, the first question he asked, cautiously and indirectly, was about the fate of that girl who had been his first infatuation. He learned that she was married and lived far from the village. He had to excuse himself from the group because he felt his eyes filling with tears.

would return to teach. The school lost a very large number of its students, who left it to follow “Our Master” Shaykh Ahmad in order to gain his *baraka*, the *baraka* of his *kuttab* and the *baraka* of God’s Word, thereby protecting their religion from the school of unbelief and error by which the government would steal their religion from them without their realizing it.

“Our Master” did not fail to call on the child’s father to notify him of the momentous news and to warn him against keeping his son in the school, and he stated his strong hope that the boy would go to the *kuttab* the very next day. His father was too sensible to be taken in by this claim. He read the press and subscribed to the daily newspaper. And he was a member of the village committee of the Nationalist Party.¹ But he was timid and polite and did not want to hurt the feelings of Our Master—the son of his own master—and so promised him that the child would attend the *kuttab* the next morning.

This turnabout caused a storm in the house. His mother insisted that he remain in the school, for it was the key to the great hopes that she had pinned on the small child. But his father had given his word, and a man never goes back on his word!

Inevitably, his father’s view carried the day and the child made his way the next morning to the *kuttab*. He does not remember his small heart ever feeling as much anxiety as it did on that day, or his breast being so constricted and narrowed. Our Master, Shaykh Ahmad, received him kindly with smiles and promptly sat him down beside himself, whereas the other youths of the *kuttab* sat on a mat in the middle of the room or on a bench running around the wall of the room. But none of this decreased his resistance. He was accustomed to being greeted each morning by that neat clean building, with its rooms whitewashed and its courtyard spread with sand. He was used to sitting in the school chairs with their receptacles for books, implements, notepads, and his fine writing slate. In the *kuttab*, by contrast, there were no seats with book receptacles, nor bells, classrooms, books, inkwells, chairs. Instead there was a tin sheet upon which the students would write with ink made from indigo or lamp soot or a similar substance. The students carried their inkwells and pens in their hands wherever they went. If they recited what was on their slates to Our Master and he found that they had memorized it, then they would clean them and write other verses of the Qur’an on them. Their manner of erasing them was filthy, because they would spit on them, rub them with their hands, and then wipe them off with the edge of their garments. Consequently their clothes were always stained with ink.

He was appalled by the fact that Our Master, when he was correcting the slates with red ink and noticed an error in what was written, would promptly lick off the incorrect words with his tongue and then wipe the slate clean with the edge of his palm. The student would then write the correct words. If a student needed to go out to attend a call of nature he did not raise his finger, as did the students in the school; rather he snapped his fingers and called out: “Our Master! Our Master!” If Our Master acknowledged the request he would touch together the fingers of his two hands and say: “Permission granted!” Then the student would leave and might possibly not return for the rest of the day.

In any case, our child’s soul was filled with repugnance at everything that surrounded him. He felt bitter, abject loneliness. When he returned to his house he was determined that he would never go back to that filthy place, no matter how much he might be threatened or reproached. He confided this urgent desire to his mother, and her eyes filled with tears.

In the morning his father and Our Master believed that he was going to the *kuttab*. But instead he went to the school by a hidden route, walking very fast, as if he were afraid that someone might follow him. He arrived very early and did not find anyone there, not even the janitor. The door was still locked and so he chose to sit with his back against the door as though he was seeking shelter at a place beloved and protective. After a while the students began to gather, some of whom asked him why he had been absent the day before, because it was the only day he had missed since coming to school. He proceeded to explain to them how he had gone to the *kuttab*, and how he had found it to be unbearably filthy and different in every respect from the beautiful school. All of a sudden he was transformed into a propagandist for the school against the *kuttab*, even though he did not know what propaganda was. When the headmaster asked him for the reason for his unusual absence, he proceeded to tell him the circumstances of the tragedy while the tears streamed from his eyes. The headmaster calmed him down and reassured him that he still had a place at the school and promised to go that very day to his father and convince him that he should remain there.

He did calm down and found himself breathing easily in his familiar environment. When it came time to leave he went to the headmaster and reminded him of his promise, and the headmaster said that he would come right away. And so he did. He arrived at the house with his two colleagues and they convinced the father that his son would be wasted in the *kuttab*. They said that he was an intelligent and outstanding student and that they anticipated a good future for him at the school. Seeing that they were not from the village but were guests, his father felt compelled to accept their wishes. This was his excuse to Our Master when he came again. And so Our Master turned away from him, saying, “There is no power and no strength save in God” and took refuge from the apostles of unbelief and error.



From the day he returned, the school became for him a holy place, like a *mihrab*² for prayer. Everything and everyone associated with it rose several degrees in his eyes. He went out of his way to become the school’s missionary in its struggle against the *kuttab*.

The main argument for the *kuttab* was that its students memorized the Qur’an, while the school neglected this and was not in fact able to graduate one student who had memorized it. And so he applied himself to memorizing the Qur’an so that he might destroy this main argument. He put a great strain on himself and his health, staying awake until midnight each night going over everything that he had previously memorized. And that was on top of his other studies. By the time the year had ended he had memorized one-third of the Qur’an excellently and would compete in recitation with anyone who challenged him. Then he formed a team of students from the school against the “*kuttab* boys,” a team to compete in everything, including memorizing the Qur’an. Therefore, some of the students were selected to memorize particular verses and *suwar* from the Qur’an to be tested on them for the sake of the competition between the two groups. Often the school emerged victorious. These victories made him feel overwhelmingly elated.

The school team took pride in many things. Their neat and tidy building stood in contrast to the old, dirty *kuttab*. The school had a spacious yard and two shady trees with beautiful flowers that could not be found anywhere else in the village. The flowers were “Pasha’s Beard” that gave off a fragrant smell. There was the *mazyarah*, a wooden closet with two large water jugs on iron stands nestled within it. Two clean buckets were situated under the water containers to collect the filtered drinking water for the *effendis*,³ who consisted of