

The Philosophy of Islamic Education: Classical Views and M. Fethullah Gulen's Perspectives

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Introduction

Islam is frequently characterized as a “religion of the Book,” the Book in question being the Qur’an, the central revealed scripture of Islam. The first word said to have been uttered by the angel Gabriel in roughly 610 CE which initiated the series of divine revelations to the Prophet Muhammad was *Iqra*! (“Recite” or “read). The full verse (96:1) commands “Read in the name of your Lord Who has created [all things].” The act of reading or reciting, in relation to Islam’s holy book and in general, thus took on an exceptionally sacrosanct quality within Islamic tradition and practice as did the acquisition of particularly religious knowledge by extension. “Are those who know and those who do not know to be reckoned the same?” asks the Qur’an (39:9). The Qur’an depicts knowledge as a great bounty from God granted to His prophets and their followers through time (2:151-52; 4:113; 5:110;12:22; 28:14, etc.).

Believers also took to heart the Prophet’s counsel, “Seek knowledge even unto China,” which sacralized the journey, often perilous, undertaken to supplement and complete one’s education, an endeavor known in Arabic as *rihlat talab al-‘ilm* (“journey in the search for knowledge”). The “seeker of knowledge” (Ar. *talib al-‘ilm*) remains until today the term used for a student, normally in its abbreviated form (*talib* [masc.]/ *taliba* [fem.]) for all levels of education. Another equally well-known statement of the Prophet exhorts, “The pursuit of knowledge is incumbent on every Muslim, male or female,” a statement that has made the acquisition of at least rudimentary knowledge of religion and its duties mandatory for the Muslim individual, irrespective of gender. “The scholars are the heirs of the prophets” is another important *hadith* invoked as proof-text to underscore the extraordinary importance of learning and its dissemination in the shaping of communal life and as a basic, integral part of

an individual's religious growth. Sanctioned by both the word of God and the words of His prophet (the latter recorded in what is known in Arabic as *hadith*, lit. "speech"), the pursuit of knowledge (Ar. *'ilm*) is regarded as a religious obligation on a par with prayer, charity, etc. It is customary to find these sacred proof-texts extolling the merits of *'ilm* assembled and recorded in many treatises on learning and education in both the pre-modern and modern periods in order to exhort the believer to embark on the noble pursuit of knowledge.¹

In this article, I will first provide a brief survey of classical Islamic education and its institutions, formal and informal, as well as identify its underlying principles and rationale. I will then discuss some of the key features of Gulen's perspectives on what constitutes ideal Islamic education. The strong correspondences between the classical views and Gulen's perspectives will be indicated, establishing thereby a continuity and innovative engagement on the latter's part with the classical heritage.

Classical Centers of Education

The earliest venue of education was the mosque, the place of formal worship in Islam. During the Prophet Muhammad's time, his mosque in Medina served both as the locus of private and public worship and for informal instruction of the believers in the religious law and related matters. The mosque continued to play these multiple roles throughout the first three centuries of Islam (seventh through the ninth centuries of the Christian or the Common era). Typically, instruction in the religious and legal sciences would be offered by a religious scholar to students who sat with him (and, less frequently, with her) in teaching circles (Ar. *halqa*, *majlis*), either inside the mosque or outside in its courtyard. By the tenth century, a new feature, the hostel (*khan*) was increasingly being established next to "teaching mosques" in Iraq and the eastern provinces of the Islamic world which allowed students and teachers from far-flung areas to reside near these places of instruction. The emergence of the mosque-khan complex at this time is a consequence of the lengthier and more intensive period of study required to qualify as a religious scholar. Religious learning had expanded by this time and study of the religious law (Ar. *al-Shari'a*) became more detailed and sophisticated, reflected in the establishment of the four prominent Sunni schools of law (Ar. *madhahib*; sing. *madhhab*)

by the tenth century.

In the tenth and eleventh centuries of the Common Era, another important institution developed and proliferated known as the *madrasa*, literally meaning in Arabic “a place of study.”

The *madrasa* was a logical development of the mosque-khan complex, being both a teaching and residential institution. In addition to the impetus of the greater systematization of knowledge, particularly of the legal sciences, which led to the emergence of the *madrasa*, the development of this institution has also been attributed in part to a reassertion of Sunni Muslim identity in the wake of the collapse of the various Shi‘i dynasties that had ruled much of the Islamic world in the tenth and eleventh centuries. In the tenth century, a Shi‘i dynasty called the Buwayhids (or Buyids) established their control over ‘Abbasid Iraq and Iran, with the Sunni ‘Abbasid caliph remaining as the nominal ruler. The Buwayhids retained their control until the eleventh century when they were beaten back by the Sunni Saljuqs, a Turkic-speaking people from Central Asia . In 969 CE, another Shi‘i dynasty from North Africa later called the Fatimids gained power in Cairo, Egypt and ruled the Sunni population until 1171 when they were defeated by the Saljuqs as well. One of the Fatimids’ enduring intellectual legacies was the establishment of the oldest continuing university in the world – the al-Azhar *mosque-madrasa* complex in Cairo -- in 972 CE to propagate Fatimid-Shi‘i doctrine and learning. With the fall of the Fatimids, there was subsequently a concerted Sunni effort to roll back the Shi ‘i influence of the past two centuries. The *madrasa* became in many ways the locus classicus for waging this campaign of religious and intellectual reclamation. This is dramatically reflected in the transformation of al-Azhar into the foremost Sunni center of higher learning in the twelfth century, a position it enjoys until today.

Perhaps the most prominent name associated with the spread of *madrasas* particularly in Iraq was Nizam al-Mulk (d. 1092), the redoubtable Saljuq vizier (Ar. *wazir*, a “minister”). His name is associated with the famous Nizamiyya academy in Baghdad, which boasted the presence of famous scholars like Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (d. 1111). In the twelfth century, the Zengid ruler Nur al-Din ibn Zangi and the famous Ayyubid ruler Salah al-Din ibn Ayyub (known as Saladin in the West) were prominent patrons of *madrasas* in Syria and Egypt.

Henceforth, the *madrassa* became the principal venue and vehicle for the transmission of religious education in the major urban centers of the Islamic world, such as Baghdad, Cairo, Damascus, and Jerusalem. It was the institution of higher learning comparable to a modern college of which it was its precursor, as will be further discussed below.

Other Venues of Education

In addition to mosques, mosque-*khans*, and *madrassas*, other institutions developed over time which played important, supplementary roles in the dissemination of learning. One of the most significant institutions of this type was the burgeoning libraries from the ninth century on. The larger mosques often had libraries attached to them containing books on religious topics. Other semi-public libraries would additionally have books on logic, philosophy, music, astronomy, geometry, medicine, astronomy, and alchemy. The first academy in the Islamic world, known in Arabic as *bayt al-hikma* (lit. “House of Wisdom”), was built by the ‘Abbasid caliph al-Ma’mun (813-33), which had a library and an astronomical observatory attached to it. In this academy, many Arab Christian scholars under their Muslim Abbasid patrons translated significant classical Greek works first into their native Syriac and then into Arabic. Works of Euclid, Galen, Plato etc. were thus made accessible to the following generations of primarily Arabic speaking scholars, influencing the development of a humanistic tradition. Sometimes wealthy private individuals endowed a library in their residences, such as ‘Ali b. Yahya (d. 888). The library known as *khizanat al-hikma* (Ar. “Treasury of Wisdom”) allowed students to study all branches of learning without fee in it; it was particularly renowned for astronomy. Other specialized institutions of learning were *dar al-qur’an* (lit. “house of the Qur’an”), which specialized in the study of the Qur’an and its sciences; *dar al-hadith*, (lit. “house of the Prophet’s statements”), which concentrated on the study of the *sunna*, the sayings and customs of the Prophet Muhammad; *dar al-‘ilm* (“house of rational sciences”), which was concerned with the philosophical and natural sciences, and *madrassat al-tibb* (“schools of medicine”), which were dedicated to the medical sciences. Three more terms — *ribat*, *khanqa*, and *zawiya* — referred to Sufi lodges and conventicles where the traditional sciences were pursued. Medical instruction also took place primarily in hospitals (*maristan/bimaristan*) which served

as schools of medicine, and also in mosques and the *madrasas*. At all times, informal and formal instruction was offered by men and women in their own homes or in the private homes of scholars and wealthy individuals. In most areas of the medieval Islamic world, such modes of private education was more the norm than formal, collective education in a *madrasa*.²

Organization and Curricula of *Madrasas*: the Parameters of Religious Education

Religious education was based upon what is termed in Arabic *al-‘ulum al-naqliyya* (lit: the “transmitted sciences”), which consists primarily of the Qur’anic sciences, the *hadith* sciences, and jurisprudence (Ar. *fiqh*). In addition to the “transmitted” or religious sciences were *al-‘ulum al-‘aqliyya* (“the rational sciences”), which included logic, philosophy, mathematics, and the natural sciences. The rational sciences were also termed the “foreign sciences” or “sciences of the ancients” pointing to their largely classical Greek provenance.

In the pre-‘Abbasid period, *madrasas*, like the “teaching” mosques before, were primarily devoted to religious learning based on the study of the transmitted sciences (study of the Qur’an, *hadith*, and the religious law), supplemented by the ancillary sciences of grammar and literature. George Makdisi, who has done pioneering work on Islamic education and demonstrated the influence of the *madrasa* on the development of the medieval European college, has given us a comprehensive idea of medieval curricula of study and the organizations of learning.³ As far as the traditional or religious sciences were concerned, it was customary for the student to learn in sequence: the Qur’an, *hadith*, Qur’anic sciences which included exegesis, variant readings of the text, and *hadith* sciences, which involved the study of the biographies of the *hadith* transmitters. The student would then proceed to study two “foundational sciences:” *usul al-din*, referring to the principles or sources of religion, and *usul al-fiqh*, the sources, principles, and methodology of jurisprudence. The student would additionally learn the law of the *madhhab* (school of law) he⁴ was affiliated with, the points of difference (Ar. *khilaf*) within the same *madhhab* and between the four schools of law, and dialectic (Ar. *jadāl*), also called disputation (Ar. *munazara*).⁵ Following *dialectic* came the study of *adab* or belles-lettres, including poetry, prosody, and grammar. These subjects in essence constituted the curriculum and meant to be sequentially studied as indicated here – at

least as preferred by the educational theorists. In reality, however, the method and course of study tended to be informal and unstructured and were often dependent on the proclivities of the teachers and sometimes of the students. Thus a typical day of instruction for the famous jurist Muhammad b. Idris al-Shafi‘i (d. 820) would involve teaching a course on Qur’an before any other topic in the day, then one each on *hadith* and disputation in that order, followed by a late morning course on the classical language, grammar, prosody, and poetry until about noon.⁶

In his famous *Prolegomena* written in the fourteenth century, Ibn Khaldun lists a similar curriculum for the religious sciences, with an emphasis on the Qur’an and its sciences, *hadith* and its sciences, including the study of specific *hadith* terminology, jurisprudence (*fiqh*) with an emphasis on the complex law of inheritance and the sources of jurisprudence but with the addition of theology (*al-kalam*), Sufism (Islamic mysticism; called in Arabic *al-tasawwuf*), and the science of the interpretation of dreams or visions (*ta‘bir al-ruya*).⁷

The *madrasa* was typically funded by a *waqf*, a charitable foundation or trust, a form of institutional organization that was borrowed by the West from the Islamic world towards the end of the eleventh century.⁸ *Waqf* rendered a person’s property safe from confiscation by the state by freezing it as a public asset but which could be passed on to the founder’s descendants. Wealthy men and women thus served as benefactors of *madrasas*, which were sometimes named after them or their families, out of both pious interest and pragmatic concerns. Many had a genuine interest in furthering public education and women played a prominent role in this particular charitable activity. For example, a renowned *madrasa* was endowed in the fourteenth century by Barakat, the mother of the Mamluk Sultan al-Ashraf Sha=ban, which became known as the *madrasa* of the mother of al-Ashraf Sha=ban. Another woman named Alif (Ulaf?), a member of the distinguished scholarly Bulqini family also from the Mamluk period, created endowments to support Qur=an reciters in her grandfather=s *madrasa*.

Methodology of Instruction and Learning

The method of teaching was by lecturing and dictation; for legal studies, *munazara* or disputation was important as well. The student was expected to memorize, first of all, the Qur'an and then as many *hadiths* possible. The teacher, commonly called a *shaykh*, would repeat the *hadiths* three times so as to allow the student to remember it. In the case of *hadith*, dictation (*imla'*) was particularly important since the text had to be precisely established. Problems of jurisprudence were also dictated as were linguistic and literary subjects. In relation to the Qur'an and *hadith*, learning by heart (*talqin*) was the principal method of acquiring knowledge and a retentive memory was, therefore, greatly prized. But, at the same time, the importance of understanding was emphasized and the students were expected to reflect on what they had learned. The saying "learning is a city, one of whose gates is memory and the other understanding" captures this two-pronged approach to learning well. The Arabic term used for "understanding" is *diraya* and is distinct from, although related to, the activity of memorization and transmission of particularly *hadiths*, a process known in Arabic as *riwaya*. *Diraya* was decisively the higher "gate" of learning since it referred to the individual's ability to comprehend the contents of *hadith*, not merely passively memorize and transmit it, and use them to expound upon the religious law. The related term for jurisprudence *fiqh* means essentially "understanding" as well and reflects the importance attached to active comprehension of and engagement with one's subjects in the educational system.¹¹

In the study of law, the scholastic method of disputation (*munazara*) prevailed, a pedagogical method that originated quite early in the Islamic milieu. It is known that the 'Abbasid caliph Harun al-Rashid encouraged the holding of disputations at his court. The famous jurist Malik b. Anas used to deputize his student 'Uthman b. 'Isa b. Kinana (d. 797) to engage another well-known jurist Abu Yusuf in *munazara*. Al-Husayn b. Isma'il (d. 942), a *hadith* scholar and jurisconsult (*mufti*) who was the judge of the Iraqi town of Kufa for sixty years, held regular sessions of legal disputations at his home during his period of judgeship, often attended by other prominent jurisconsults. Other examples of regular disputation sessions abound in the legal literature. These sessions tended to be very popular and often attracted large audiences, frequently running from sunset to midnight.¹²

The method of disputation required that the disputant have a) a comprehensive knowledge of *khilaf*, which referred to the divergent legal opinions of jurisconsults; b) a thorough acquaintance with *jadal* or dialectic; and acquire skill through practice in c) *munazara*. Law students had to have memorized a thorough list as possible of the disputed matters of law and know the answers for them. By virtue of their skill in disputation the students earned their licence or certificate, known in Arabic as *ijaza*, to teach law and issue legal opinions.¹³

The “rational” or “ancient” sciences

The so-called “rational sciences” (*al-‘ulum al-‘aqliyya*) or “the sciences of the ancient” (*al-‘ulum al-awa’il*) usually consisted of seven main components: 1) logic (*al-mantiq*) which was the foundation of all others; 2) *al-arithmatiqi*, arithmetic, including accounting (*hisab*); 3) *al-handasa*, geometry; 4) *al-hay’a*, astronomy; 5) *al-musiki*, music, which dealt with the theory of tones and their definition by number, etc.; 6) *al-tabi’iyyat* (“the natural sciences”), which was concerned with the theory of bodies at rest and in motion — human, animal, plant, mineral and heavenly, important subdivisions of which were medicine (*al-tibb*) and agriculture (*al-falaha*); and, finally, 7) *‘ilm al-ilahiyyat*, metaphysics.¹⁴

As early as the middle of the 8th century during the Abbasid period, strong interest began developing in the learning of the ancient world, particularly its Greek sources, but also to a lesser extent in its Persian and Indian ones as well. The intellectual awakening that this interest spawned has rendered this age especially illustrious in the annals of Islamic and world history. Due to the political and territorial expansion of Islam beyond the original Arabian peninsula, Muslims became the heir of the older and more cultured people whom they conquered or encountered. In Syria and Iraq, they adapted themselves to the already existing Aramaic civilization which had been influenced by the later Greek civilization in Syria and by the Persian civilization in Iraq. In three-quarters of a century after the establishment of Baghdad, the Arabic-reading world was in possession of the chief philosophical works of Aristotle, of the leading Neo-Platonic commentators, and of most of the medical writings of Galen, as well as of Persian and Indian scientific works. In only a few decades Arab scholars would assimilate what had taken the Greeks centuries to develop.

India acted as an early source of inspiration, especially in the wisdom literature and mathematics. About 771 CE, an Indian traveller introduced into Baghdad a treatise on astronomy which by order of the caliph al-Mansur was translated by Muhammad al-Fazari (d. between 796-806). Al-Fazari subsequently became the first astronomer in Islam. The stars had of course interested the Arabs since pre-Islamic times, but no scientific study of them was undertaken until this time. Islam had a particular interest in the study of astronomy as a means for fixing the direction of prayer towards the Ka`ba. The famous mathematician al-Khwarizmi (d. 850) based his widely known astronomical tables (Ar. *zij*) on al-Fazari's work. From al-Khwarizmi's name we get the word "algorithm." Other astronomical works were translated in this period from Persian into Arabic, especially during the time of Harun al-Rashid. In the field of literature and the arts, the Persian contribution was the strongest.

In 765, the Caliph al-Mansur, afflicted with a stomach disease which had baffled his physicians, sent for Jurjis ibn Bakhtishu', a Nestorian Christian physician from Iraq who served as the dean of the hospital at Jundishapur (Gondishapur) in Persia. In the ancient world, Jundishapur was noted for its academy of medicine and philosophy said to have been founded about 555 by the great Persian king Anushirwan. When the school of Alexandria was closed during the Christian period, many of its scholars are said to have fled to the school at Jundishapur. The science of the institution was based on the ancient Greek tradition, but the language of instruction was Aramaic. Jurjis soon won the confidence of the caliph and became the court physician while retaining his Christian faith. It is reported that on being invited by the caliph to embrace Islam, he retorted that he preferred the company of his fathers, regardless of whether they were in heaven or in hell.¹⁵ He appears not to have suffered any ill consequences on account of his candor. In Baghdad, Ibn Bakhtishu` became the founder of a brilliant family dynasty of medical practitioners which for six or seven generations, that is covering a period of two centuries and a half, exercised an almost continuous monopoly over the court medical practice. Jurjis' son Bakhtishu' (d. 801) and his grandson Jibril (Gabriel) served as court physicians to Harun al-Rashid.¹⁶

At the time of the Arab conquest of the Fertile Crescent, the intellectual legacy of Greece was unquestionably the most precious treasure at hand. Under the two Abbasid caliphs al-Mahdi and his son Harun al-Rashid in particular, the Muslim army won decisive victories over the

Byzantine enemy forces. The young Harun actually led his father's campaign against the Byzantines; in 782, the Arab army reached the Bosphorus, at the very doors of Constantinople itself. The Byzantine queen-regent at that time, Irene (who held the regency in the name of her son Constantine VI) was forced to sue for peace and conclude a treaty with the Muslims. The various Abbasid military excursions into the land of the Byzantines or as the Arab chroniclers say, the land of the Romans, resulted in the introduction, among other objects of booty, of Greek manuscripts. Al-Ma'mun is said to have sent his ambassadors as far as Constantinople, to the Byzantine Emperor Leo the Armenian himself, in search of Greek manuscripts. Al-Mansur is requested and received a number of books, including Euclid, from the Byzantine emperor. The Arab Muslims were not able to read the Greek originals; therefore they had to depend on translations made by their subjects who did know Greek: Nestorian Christians. The Nestorians first translated the Greek works into Syriac and then from Syriac into Arabic.

One of the most important achievements of al-Ma'mun's rule is his establishment of the previously mentioned Bayt al-Hikma (the House of Wisdom) in 830. This House of Wisdom was a combination library, an academy, and a translation bureau. One historian has described the Bayt al-Hikma as the most important educational institution since the foundation of the Alexandrian Museum in the first half of the third century B.C. Under al-Ma'mun, the Bayt al-Hikma became the center of translation activity. This era of avid translation would last through the early tenth century.¹⁷

Before the age of translation was brought to an end, practically all the works of Aristotle that had survived to that day, had been translated into Arabic. Two Muslim chroniclers tell us that no less than a hundred works of Aristotle, whom the Muslims called "the philosopher of the Greeks," had been translated. Some of these works attributed to Aristotle, however, are now known to be forgeries. This intellectual flourish in the Islamic world was taking place while Europe was almost totally ignorant of Greek thought and science. Its later rediscovery of it was through the Arabic translations which in turn would spur the Western Renaissance. One modern historian has remarked, "While al-Rashid and al-Ma'mun were delving into Greek and Persian philosophy, their contemporaries in the West, Charlemagne and his lords, were reportedly dabbling in the art of writing their names."¹⁸ Aristotle's works on logic and particularly two of his works, *Rhetoric and Poetics*, became, along with the study of Arabic

grammar, the basis of humanistic studies (Ar. *adab*) in Islam. As these works available in translation progressively took intellectual circles by storm, the Islamic world, like Patristic Christianity before it, had to grapple with “the problem of how to assimilate the ‘pagan’ knowledge of the Greeks to a conception of the world that included God as its creator.”¹⁹ The tension between the two led to a creative accommodation and synthesis as well as to a festering uneasiness and outright hostility in the medieval world, a range of responses that in some measure still influences modern discourses on the nature and parameters of education in Islamic societies.

In the early ‘Abbasid period, the rational sciences were taught in special institutions called *dar al-‘ilm* (lit. “house of knowledge”) which flourished until about the middle of the eleventh century when they began to cede ground to the *madrasa*. Like the *madrasa*, the *dar al-‘ilm* was also often a *waqf* institution, established by a private Muslim individual using his or her private property for a public charitable purpose. In addition to these institutions, the rational sciences were typically taught in private homes and in other non-institutional locations.

Because of the largely non-institutional nature of this kind of education, it has been assumed by some historians that instruction in the rational sciences considerably declined and then well-nigh disappeared after the twelfth century, just as Europe was beginning to experience a surge in learning inspired by its contacts with the Islamic world. It appears that these historians had been looking for *‘ilm* in all the wrong places because once the *madrasa* with its mandated curriculum of religious sciences became the predominant institution of formal learning, the rational subjects were taught primarily in informal study circles in private homes, libraries, and in the *dar al-‘ilm* institutions until they faded away. Since most modern scholars have tended to focus on the *madrasa* as the locus classicus of Islamic education, non-formal and non-institutionalized modes of learning tended to be downplayed.

Recent research based on unpublished manuscripts, charitable foundation deed documents, and biographical works on scholars yields a revised picture. In favorable circumstances, the rational sciences continued to be taught and studied openly even in *madrasas*, sometimes even in mosques, and certainly in informal study-circles and libraries. This was a natural consequence of the fact that the broadly educated person who had acquired mastery in several fields, including the Hellenistic subjects, remained the ideal throughout the pre-modern period,

in contradistinction to our era of specialization. Thus biographical dictionaries from the Mamluk period (1256-1571) refer to *shaykhs* (professors and learned notables) in Damascus who had achieved enviable mastery (Ar. *riyasa, imama*) in a number of subjects, including theology, belles lettres, medicine, mathematics, natural science, and the Hellenistic sciences. A Hanafi jurist is described in one biographical entry as having taught logic and scholastic dialectic in the Umayyad mosque in Damascus during the Mamluk period.²⁰ In a mosque or *madrasa* environment, the studying and teaching of Hellenic philosophy could be the most problematic, since some of its postulations were at variance with monotheistic doctrines such as the existence of an omnipotent, personal, and providential God, the finiteness of the world, and bodily resurrection. Thus a philosopher who had studied with the well-known theologian Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (d. 1209) was accused by some of his colleagues of corrupting his students at the *madrasa* where he lived and taught. The rational sciences along with the Islamic sciences could always be taught discreetly by professors who had a partiality for both types of learning under a neutral or concealing umbrella rubric like *hadith*. Even in unfavorable political circumstances, such as during the reign of the twelfth century Ayyubid rulers al-Mu‘azzam and al-Ashraf who tried to forbid the teaching of philosophy, the teaching of the Hellenistic sciences continued unabated.²¹ George Makdisi, who still remains after his death the preeminent scholar on Islamic education, has pointed to the fact that the “ancient sciences” remained accessible and avidly pursued through the High Middle Ages, even by “conventional” scholars such as the Shafi‘i jurisconsult Sayf al-Din al-Amidi (d. 1234). In regard to these sciences, he remarked that “Not only was access easy, it was in turn concealed, condoned, allowed, encouraged, held in honour, according to different regions and periods, in spite of the traditionalist opposition, the periodic prohibitions, and autos-da-fé.”²²

Humanistic studies (*Adab*)

Another very important part of education in the Islamic milieu was the humanistic sciences, termed in Arabic *adab*, which was based primarily upon the study of literature (poetry, belles-lettres, prosody) and the linguistic sciences (grammar, syntax, philology). In addition to religious or sacred literature, “profane” or secular literature was also being produced since the

Umayyad period (661-750). In the field of literature and the arts, the Persian contribution was the strongest. The earliest literary prose work in Arabic that has come down to us is *Kalila wa-Dimna*, a translation of a wisdom tale from Pahlavi (Middle Persian), which in turn was a translation from the Sanskrit. The original work was brought to Persia from India, together with the game of chess, during the reign of the Persian King Anusharwan (531-78) and would become hugely popular in world literature upon its translation into various languages. The book *Kalila and Dimna* was part of the burgeoning mirrors-of-princes literature and thus intended to instruct princes in the art of administration by means of animal fables. It was rendered into Arabic by Ibn al-Muqaffa', a Persian Zoroastrian convert to Islam, whose life spanned the late Umayyad and 'Abbasid periods. Ibn al-Muqaffa' was a member of the powerful, highly educated secretarial class which was largely responsible for the emergence and development of *adab*. As Islamic realms expanded and a sophisticated, complex bureaucracy evolved, the epistolary (prose-essay) genre arose which eventually would spawn a rich secular, administrative literature. Many from among this class of royal secretaries and courtiers continued to provide adaptations and translations of Indian-Persian wisdom literature for the entertainment and edification of the upper class. Among the translated works were ancient histories and legends, fables and proverbs – almost anything that appealed to the literary sophisticate and social dilettante. Poetry had dipped in popularity in the early Islamic period but began to enjoy a resurgence in the eighth century. Pre-Islamic poetry in fact was minutely studied by Muslim philologists and religious scholars because of the proximity of its language to that of the Qur'an and thus its beneficial role in elucidating abstruse words or locutions in the sacred text.

As a consequence of these intellectual and cultural trends, a specifically Islamic humanism emerged based on the concept of *adab*, which according to probably the most famous belle-lettrist in Arabic literature, Amr b. Bahr al-Jahiz (d. 869), may be defined as “1) the total educational system of 2) a cultured Muslim who 3) took the whole world for his object of curiosity and knowledge.”²³ *Adab*, according to the first part of this definition, is the equivalent of the Greek notion of *paideia*, according to which a holistic education contributes to the moral development of the individual. One can even speak of a multiplicity of humanistic trends (humanisms) in this period of extraordinary intellectual and cultural flourish, including

philosophical, religious, and legalistic humanism.²⁴ As our sources show, *adab* in the broad sense of humanistic studies became an integral part of the curriculum in mosques, *madrasas*, and libraries. The sciences of the Arabic language (*'ulum al-'Arabiyya*) were necessary ancillaries to the religious sciences from the very beginning. According to the well-known philologist al-Anbari (d. 1181), a full range of offerings in the Arabic sciences would include grammar, lexicology, morphology, metrics, rhyme, prosody, history of the Arab tribes, Arab genealogy, as well as the science of dialectic for grammar and the science of grammatical theory and methodology.²⁵ Secular, belle-lettristic works were sometimes taught even in mosques; the biographer al-Safadi mentions that a shaykh taught al-Hariri's famous *Maqamat* and other *adab* works in the Umayyad mosque.²⁶ Being a polymath was a matter of pride and scholars won renown for their breadth of learning in various religious and secular subjects rather than for a narrow specialization. Thus the elder Subki, father of the famous biographer and chronicler Taj al-Din Subki, is described by his son as not atypically having mastery over jurisprudence, *hadith*, Qur'anic exegesis and recitation, didactic and speculative theology, grammar and syntax, lexicography, belles-lettres and ethics, medicine, scholastic dialectic, *khilaf* (points of difference among the law schools, logic, poetry, heresiography, arithmetic, law, and astronomy).²⁷ Physicians were also commonly learned in *adab* and the legal sciences just as many jurists were also learned in medicine.²⁸

Role of Women Scholars

The master narrative on Islamic education in both Islamic (Arabic, Persian, Urdu, etc.) and Western languages has traditionally minimized the role of women in scholarship, creating the impression that their influence has been slight. Yet, not-as-frequently consulted sources like biographical dictionaries establish that women's contribution particularly in the transmission of *hadith* and in other areas of religious scholarship has been considerable and recognized as such by their contemporaries. For example, 'A'isha, the Prophet's widow, was a prolific transmitter of *hadith*; a significant number of her reports have been recorded by al-Bukhari (d. 870), author of the most authoritative Sunni *hadith* compilation. She was also renowned for her exegesis of the Qur'an and was consulted widely by the closest associates of the Prophet

on account of her knowledge of the religious law.²⁹

During the later period, we have evidence of impressive scholarship evinced by women as recorded in biographical dictionaries, such as the one composed by Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Sakhawi (d. 1497).³⁰ An overwhelming number of the 1,075 women referred to in al-Sakhawi’s chapter on women are distinguished for their exemplary religious piety and for their excellence in and dedication to religious scholarship. The general picture that emerges is of women who were active in both receiving and imparting religious knowledge, particularly in the transmission of hadith. The notion of sexually segregated space that we take for granted as a defining feature of medieval Muslim society is challenged by what these biographical accounts have to tell us about the formal and informal settings in which women scholars conducted their activity. Women are depicted as freely studying with men and other women; after becoming credentialed as teachers, they would go on to teach both men and women. The settings include the *madrasa*, informal study circles (*halaqas*) and private homes. Two of the most important *madrasas* mentioned by name are the Zahiriyya and the Salihiyya in Cairo, Egypt where some of these women received their education and later taught.³¹ Our protagonists are mostly women from elite backgrounds; almost without exception, they are described as being of noble birth, and/or from families which were already distinguished for a tradition of learning, and for producing religious and legal scholars. The male relatives of these women appear to have been quite encouraging of the desire of these women to acquire advanced religious instruction. Clearly, these women were empowered by their specific social and familial circumstances which appear not to have recognized a gender barrier in the acquisition and dissemination of religious scholarship.

These women scholars, like their male counterparts, spent years in scholarly apprenticeship, making the usual rounds of academic circles, choosing to study closely with particular, renowned teachers, and finally earning the coveted *ijaza*, the teaching certificate which permitted them to instruct others. Like their male colleagues, they clearly worked hard to make their entrée into the world of formal religious training. The actual academic training of the best of these women scholars appear to match that of the best male scholars in rigor and thoroughness, a fact that was acknowledged in their own time, given the amount of academic recognition that came their way as a result. This is reflected primarily in the number and

quality of the students they supervised, which included al-Sakhawi himself, and prior to him, his own teacher, the famous Ibn Hajar, for example. Some women traveled quite far and wide in their scholarly quest. For example, Fatima bt. Muhammad b. >Abd al-Hadi obtained her teaching certificates in Damascus, Egypt, Aleppo, Hama, Homs and other places, studying with renowned scholars like the famous *hadith* scholar Muhammad Ibn >Asakir, among others. Rabi=, daughter of the celebrated Ibn Hajar mentioned above, received teaching certificates from a large number of Egyptian and Syrian scholars. Her *rihlat talab al-ilm* (Atravel in the pursuit of knowledge@) began at the age of four when her father took her to Mecca to listen to al-Zayn al-Maraghi.

A key descriptive term used for some of these distinguished women scholars is *ra'isa* (literally, “a female leader”) and the more elevated form *kathirat al-ri'asa* (“having plenitude of leadership”). These terms are particularly significant since they connote exceptional mastery in the scholar’s field(s) of expertise and her authority. One scholar, Halima bt. Ahmad b. Muhammad, who is described as possessing *kathirat al-riyasa* or “plenitude of leadership,” is clearly deserving of this accolade. She is described as having being subjected to a rigorous examination before being granted her certificate to teach by her board of examiners which was constituted by a number of the most distinguished scholars of the day. After her certification, prominent scholars audited her transmission of *hadith*.³⁴

Participation of Religious Minorities

The participation of religious minorities, mainly Christians and Jews, in the intellectual and academic life in Islamic societies is well-documented in various sources. We have already referred to the enormous contributions of Jacobite and Nestorian Christians to the efflorescence of Islamic civilization starting in the 8th century through their translation activities funded by their Muslim patrons. Inter-faith dialogue and dialectics were sometimes conducted at the caliphal court to promote a critical understanding of the other’s religion. For example, the Abbasid caliph al-Mahdi (d. 785) convened formal discussions on theological matters with the Catholicos Timothy, leader of the Nestorian church in Iraq in the eighth

century.

Biographical sources in particular are a valuable repository of information about inter-religious scholarly exchanges and collaboration taking place in study-circles and other venues. One source mentions that a certain Muslim scholar learned in grammar and the rational sciences held study sessions in his house attended not only by Muslims but also by Jews, Christians, “heretics,” and Samaritans,³⁵ while another shaykh, ‘Izz al-Din al-Hasan al-Irbili (d. 1262) is said to have read rational sciences and philosophy with fellow-Muslims, the “People of the Book,” and philosophers.³⁶ Other such examples occur in valuable biographical works of the period. Lessons in non-Muslim scriptures were also sometimes given by Muslim scholars. According to one source, a professor in Damascus convened study-circles on the New Testament which were attended by Christians, and held others on the Old Testament attended by Jews.³⁷ The celebrated Jewish philosopher Moses Maimonides, called in Arabic Musa ibn Maymun, served as Saladdin’s court physician and wrote most of his philosophical treatises in Arabic. Highly respected for his scholarship, he moved easily in learned Muslim and Jewish circles. When he died in 1204, his death was officially mourned by Jews and Muslims alike for three days in Cairo where he was born. In Persia, the Syrian Jacobite Catholicos Abu al-Faraj Ibn al-‘Ibri (d. 1286) lectured in the thirteenth century at the famous Il-Khanid observatory and library of Maragha on Euclid and Ptolemy.³⁸ This kind of ecumenical scholarly collegiality was a major ingredient in the formidable edifice of learning in the medieval Muslim world.

M. Fethullah Gulen’s Views on Education

Our survey to date established the general receptivity of early Muslims to knowledge, religious and secular, regardless of its provenance, as long as the acquisition of such knowledge did not contribute to moral turpitude and did not violate Islamic norms of decency. As we discussed earlier, Greek, Persian, Indian, and Syriac learning was selectively synthesized with Islamic scholarship and values which enriched the religious sciences and fostered the cultivation of the natural sciences, philosophy, belles-lettres, and mathematics, among other disciplines. We have recorded instances of Muslims, Christians, Jews, and

“heretics” (as called by some of the sources) studying with and learning from one another in a common educational enterprise. Education, in many ways, was a great equalizer. Therefore, as we have seen, women often had the opportunity to excel in the study and teaching of the religious sciences, whose names and accomplishments are gratefully recorded in their works by their male students and colleagues. As noted before, local rulers, notables, and the state sometimes tried to impose restrictions on the curricula of *madrasas* but many scholars simply ignored them or found creative ways to circumvent them.

Education served its best purpose when it fostered honest, intellectual inquiry based on critical study of texts and dialectal (and, ideally, also respectful) engagement with one’s peers. Scholarly disagreement was welcomed and, as we saw, even publicly staged, in legal and intellectual circles. A statement attributed to the Prophet states, “There is mercy in the differences of my community.” This *hadith* embodies a deep-seated awareness that the hermeneutics of reading scripture – or any other text – yields a multiplicity of equally valid readings at any given time or place. Re-emphasis upon scriptural and classical Islamic values of tolerance for a diversity of opinions and of reasoned dissent and receptivity towards the participation of religious minorities and women in public and intellectual life are in accord with the orientation of liberal educational systems.

Upon careful study, Fethullah Gulen’s philosophy of a wholistic educational system which promotes spiritual enrichment and critical thinking for men and women, Muslim and non-Muslim, appears to be very closely derived from and highly compatible with the classical philosophy of Islamic education which prevailed in the early pre-modern era. As we have already affirmed, the foundational texts of Islam emphasize the acquisition and dissemination of learning as a fundamental religious duty. Thus the Qur’an (3:79) states, “Be you masters in that you teach the Scripture and in that you yourselves study [it].” Fethullah Gulen’s passionate commitment to learning as a means of training both the body and the soul to do the will of God in this world is well-documented and along the lines of classical Muslim pedagogical principles based on the Qur’an and *sunna*. Gulen thus remarks in one of his works, “We are creatures composed of not only a body or mind or feelings or spirit; rather, we are harmonious compositions of all these elements.”³⁹ Proper training of all these aspects of the human condition in concert promote the wholistic development of the individual –

spiritually, morally, rationally, and psychologically.

In his pedagogical views, Gulen does not set up a misleading demarcation between an assumed hermetically sealed religious sphere and a secular sphere. As is well-known, he realized the importance of mastering the physical sciences and rightly emphasized that there was no cognitive disjunction between spiritual truth and scientific inquiry, and thus no dissonance between Islamic principles and scientific methodologies. Like al-Ma‘arri, he bemoaned the artificial rupture effected by some between faith and reason and saw that as a violation of Islam’s true purpose in bringing about a synthesis between the two. In a recent study of the Gulen movement, a young biology teacher from the movement was quoted as saying, “For a Muslim, studying or learning science is equivalent to worship. The same is true for teaching science.”⁴⁰ This statement encapsulates Gulen’s personal reverence for the sciences and its centrality to a wholistic educational program which blends faith and science. The Qur’an after all exhorts humans to “reflect on the creation of the heavens and Earth (3:190), which Gulen understands as an invitation

to discover the Divine mysteries in the book of the universe and through every new discovery that deepens and unfolds the true believer, to live a life full of spiritual pleasure along a way of light extending from belief to knowledge of God and therefrom to love of God; and then to progress to the Hereafter and God’s pleasure and approval – this is the way to become a perfect, universal human being.⁴¹

Studying God’s creation is thus a natural consequence of an individual’s faith in and love for Him, leading to deeper knowledge of matters of the mind and the spirit and ultimately to “annihilation in and subsistence with God.”⁴² Expressed in Sufi terms, this last quoted phrase underscores the desirability of rooting one’s scientific learning in the higher purpose of

-serving the Almighty (*hizmet*) and not for material gain or worldly glory. *Hizmet*, service to God through one's work, particularly teaching, is a central crucial tenet of Gulen's educational philosophy and has been taken to be indicative of "worldly asceticism" on his part.⁴³

It should be noted, however, that teachers in Gulen schools in a highly secular country such as Turkey and outside of Turkey do not currently overtly proclaim their adherence to Islam nor teach the sciences from a religious perspective, since both might invite the disapproval of the authorities. Gulen suggests instead that it is enough to be a faithful Muslim while imparting secular knowledge because "knowledge itself becomes an Islamic value when it is imparted by teachers with Islamic values and who can show students how to employ knowledge in the right and beneficial Islamic way."⁴⁴ In a similar vein, Gulen emphasizes the importance of *temsil* for his followers in general: to represent the best of Islam through their personal behavior and interactions with others.⁴⁵ Exemplary, loving conduct towards others is the best witness one can provide for one's moral integrity and fidelity to God.

In addition to the sciences, Gulen also lays emphasis on a humanistic approach to education, which reflects earlier patterns of classical education in the Islamic world. Such a broad-based humanistic approach, according to Gulen, would include the inculcation of religious, ethical and traditional cultural values,⁴⁶ values which in their application are universal and broadly humanitarian. One should also not be severed from the history of one's community, whether as individuals or as nations, because a highly developed historical consciousness lends valuable contextualized perspective on one's contemporary life. Gulen comments,

Improving a community is possible by elevating the coming generations to the rank of humanity, not by obliterating the bad ones. Unless the seeds of religion, traditional values, and historical consciousness germinate throughout the country, new bad elements will inevitably grow up in the place of every bad element that has been eradicated.⁴⁷

Gulen evinced much admiration for the Ottoman empire and the values of the high civilization it had spawned, for which he was sometimes labeled a "reactionary" (*irticaci*) by those

unsympathetic to him and his cause.

The Role of Women and Religious Minorities

The Gulen movement supports increased educational and work opportunities for women. Many women work particularly as educators in schools and universities, and sometimes as administrators in certain areas. Women's access to religious education in particular was never disputed in the medieval period and during some eras led to a remarkable flourish in women's scholarship, as we have previously remarked.⁴⁸ The Gulen schools continue this venerable tradition in the contemporary period.

With regard to religious minorities, Gulen, like his mentor Said Nursi before him, was a firm believer in dialogue and the establishment of cordial, tolerant relations with them. On account of such tolerant proclivities, fostered in fact by a strong Islamic identity on the part of the teachers, Gulen schools have been successful in putting down roots in various milieus, in and outside of Turkey. In return, they have been welcomed in places as diverse as Albania and Russia. Gulen often quotes Mevlana Rumi's comment to the effect that the individual should be "like a pair of compasses, with one end in the necessary place, the center, and with the other one in the 72 nations [*millet*]," referring to the different *millets* or religious communities which co-existed peacefully under the Ottomans.⁴⁹ Gulen schools, whose curricula are not specifically religious, are open to students of any faith background. Such a spirit of tolerance and inclusiveness reflects the spirit which characterized the *madrasas* and informal learning circles of the medieval period, which, as we indicated before, welcomed the active participation of religious minorities in their intellectual life. The inter-faith academic milieu provided valuable opportunities for dialogue and friendly debate in medieval learning circles, as it does now. Inter-faith dialogue in fact remains a priority for Gulen and his followers today, as evinced in the following statement made by Gulen,

Interfaith dialogue is a must today, and the first step in establishing it is forgetting the past, ignoring polemical arguments, and giving precedence

to common points, which far outnumber polemical ones.⁵⁰

Emphasis on shared universal values provide the point of departure for inter-faith educational and dialogic activities.

Conclusion

The spread and success of the Gulen schools within and outside Turkey testifies to the efficacy of his educational philosophy which lays equal stress on the inculcation of Islamic ethical values and a sound training in the secular sciences. Gulen's emphasis on reason wedded to faith is perfectly in accord with the spirit of the golden age of Islamic civilization with its flourishing culture and learning as well as with the spirit of our own age, as we have established. *Madrasa* reform in the wake of September 11 in particular is currently receiving serious attention in a number of Muslim countries and its implementation has begun in earnest in several of them.⁵¹ In this context, the Gulen schools and their philosophy of education deserve closer attention since they are worthy of emulation in the contemporary period.

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NOTES

1 Two of the best known of such treatises are Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr’s *Jami‘ bayan al-‘ilm wa-fadlihi* (“The Expository Compendium on Knowledge and Its Virtue) (Beirut, 2000); and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziya’s *Fadl al- ‘ilm wa-’l-‘ulama’* (The Virtues of Knowledge and the Learned”) (Beirut, 2001).

2 See, for example, Michael Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190-1350* (Cambridge, 1994), 69 ff

3 See his classic study *The Rise of Colleges: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West* (Edinburgh, 1901).

4 Law tended to be the preserve of the male.

5 Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges*, 80 ff.

6 Yaqut, *Irshad al-arib ila ma‘rifat al-adib*, ed. al-Rifa‘i (Cairo, 1936-8), 17:304.

7 Ibn Khaldun, *al-Muqaddima* (“the Prolegomena,”) tr. F. Rosenthal (New York, 1958).

8 George Makdisi, The Madrasa as a Charitable Trust and the University as a Corporation in the Middle Ages,” *Correspondance d’Orient*, 2 (Actes du Ve Congres International d’Arabisants et d’Islamisants, Brussels, 1970).

. Cf. Jonathan Berkey, *The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo: a Social History of Islamic Education* (Princeton, 1992), 162.

. Al-Sakhawi, *al-Daw al-Lami‘ li-ahl al-qarn al-tasi‘a* (Beirut, n.d.), 12:7-8; 93-94; cf. Berkey, *Transmission*, 164.

11 George Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges*, 144.

12 Ibid., 133 ff. It is no coincidence therefore that the college degree also came to be called a “licence” in French, reflecting its Islamic genealogy. For further such parallels, see George Makdisi, “The Scholastic Method in Medieval Education: an Inquiry into its origins in Law and Theology,” *Speculum* 49 (1974): 640-61; idem, “Interaction between Islam and the West,” in *Mediaeval Education in Islam and the West*, George Makdisi and Dominic Sourdel, eds. (Paris, 1977); and “On the Origin of the College in Islam and the West,” in *Islam and the Mediaeval West: Aspects of Intercultural Relations*, ed. K.I.H. Semaan (Albany, 1980).

13 Art. “Madrasa,” *Encyclopedia of Islam*, new edition (Leiden, 1960-93), 5:1130.

14 Art. “Madrasa,” *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 5:1130.

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- 15 Ibn al-'Ibri, *Ta'rikh mukhtasar al-duwal*, ed. Antun Salihani (Beirut, 1890), 215.
- 16 Philip Hitti, *History of the Arabs* (London, 1953), 309.
- 17 See further Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: the Graeco-Arabic translation movement in Baghdad and early 'Abbasid Society (2nd-4th/8th-10th centuries)* (London, 1998).
- 18 Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, 315.
- 19 Makdisi, *Rise of Colleges*, 77.
- 20 Al-Safadi, *al-Wafi bi al-wafayat*, ed. H. Ritter et al. (Istanbul, 1931), 21:88; cited by Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice*, 84, n. 76.
- 21 Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice*, 84.
- 22 Makdisi, *Rise of Colleges*, 78.
- 23 Tarif Khalidi, *Classical Arab Islam: The Culture and Heritage of the Golden Age* (Princeton, 1985), 57.
- 24 These categories are being taken from the chapter by Michael G. Carter, "Humanism in Medieval Islam," in *Humanism, Culture, and Language in the Near East*, eds. Asma Afsaruddin and Mathias Zahniser (Winona Lake, Ind., 1997), 27-38.
- 25 Al-Anbari, *Nuzhat al-alibba' fi tabaqat al-udaba'*, ed. A. Amer (Stockholm, 1962), 55; cited by Makdisi, *Rise of Colleges*, 79.
- 26 Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice*, 85, n. 82.
- 27 Al-Subki, *al-Tabaqat al-shafi'iyya al-kubra* (Cairo, 1964-76), 6:146-47, 150, 168-69; also in Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice*, 86.
- 28 See, for example, Ibn Abi 'Usaybi'a, *'Uyun al-anba' fi tabaqat al-atibba'* (Beirut, 1965), 646-51.
- 29 Ibn Sa'd, *al-Tabaqat al-kubra*, ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata (Beirut, 1418/1997), 8:52-53.
- 30 Al-Sakhawi, *al-Daw al-Lami' a li-ahl al-Qur'an al-tasi'a* (Beirut, n.d.), vol.12.
- 31 *Al-Daw al-Lami'a*, 12:93.
- . Ibid., 12:103.

. Ibid., 12:34.

34 *Al-Daw al-Lami'*, 12:129-30

35 Al-Yunini, *Dhayl Mir'at al-zaman* (Hyderabad, 1954-61), 2:165.

36 Al-Safadi, *al-Wafi*, 12:247; cited by Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice*, 84, n. 80.

37 Ibn Khallikan, *Wafayat al-a'yan wa-anba abna' al-zaman*, ed. M. 'Abd al-Hamid (Cairo, 1948), 4:397.

38 Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, 683.

39 See M. Fethullah Gulen, *Essays, Perspectives, Opinions* (Rutherford, N.J., 2002), 78.

40 Quoted by Elisabeth Ozdalga, "Secularizing Trends in Fethullah Gulen's Movement: Impasse or Opportunity for Further Renewal?" *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies* 12 (2003): 68.

41 M. Fethullah Gulen, *Key Concepts in the Practice of Sufism* (Fairfax, Virginia, 1999), 11.

42 Ibid., 12.

43 For further discussion of this point, see Elisabeth Ozdalga, "Worldly Asceticism in Islamic Casting: Fethullah Gulen's Inspired Piety and Activism," *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies* 17 (2000), 88ff.

44 See Bekim Agai, "Fethullah Gulen and His Movement's Islamic Ethic of Education," *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies* 11 (2002), 41.

45 Temsil is opposed to teblig which is overt proselytization; see Bayram Balci, Fethullah Gulen's Missionary Schools in Central Asia and their Role in the Spreading of Turkism and

Islam;" *Religion, State & Society* 31 (2003): 162-63.

46 See Gulen's *Criteria or Lights of the Way* (Izmir, 1998), 1:35; 44-45.

47 Gulen, *Essays*, 61-62.

48 See my article, "Knowledge, Piety, and Religious Leadership: Re-Inserting Women into the Master Narrative," in *Sisters in Faith: Women, Religion and Leadership in Christianity and Islam*, ed. Scott Alexander (Lanham, Md., 2006), forthcoming.

49 Agai, "Fetuhullah Gulen," 44.

50 Ali Unal and Alphonse Williams, *Advocate of Dialogue: Fethullah Gulen* (Fairfax, 2000), 244.

51 See the various case studies in Daun and Walford, eds., *Educational Strategies among Muslims*.