

## WISDOM AND LEARNING:

### HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE JEWISH, CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM TRADITIONS

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Fordham University, as you might guess from banners on its campuses, is celebrating this year a significant anniversary, the 175<sup>th</sup> since its founding in 1841. In the process of this anniversary we are trying to make an obscure word familiar: *dodransbicentennial*. That mouthful derives from four Latin words or roots: *quadrans*, meaning a quarter; *de* which subtracts that quarter and in the process squashes *de* and *quadrans* together to make *dodrans*; centennial comes from the Latin for 100 years, and *bi-* doubles the centennial from which *dodrans* subtracts twenty-five years. We hope you are still here twenty-five years from now for Fordham's more readily intelligible bicentennial and my sixty-fifth semiannual McGinley lecture, to take place in the fall of 2041

On the Great Seal of Fordham University there are also three Latin words, and they are not squashed together: *Sapientia et Doctrina*. I would like to talk about those three words this evening, but in translation: Wisdom and Learning. They possibly derive from a verse in the Book of Ecclesiastes where they are linked as well with a word usually translated as "skill." Paradoxically the whole verse expresses great pessimism about the results of possessing wisdom, knowledge and skill: "[S]ometimes one who has toiled with wisdom and knowledge and skill must leave all to be enjoyed by another who did not toil for it. This also is vanity and a great evil" (Eccl 2:21).<sup>1</sup> Qoheleth, the speaker to the assembly of Israel in the Book of Ecclesiastes, is

identified with Solomon, “the son of David” (Eccl 1:1). Solomon started out his reign as a man of peace inspiring high expectations, but he ended his years with an acute sense that “all is vanity” (Eccl 1:2).

That inscription on Fordham’s escutcheon expresses a much more positive sentiment, a hope that the university will be able to impart learning or knowledge (*doctrina*), whether liberal or vocational, in various fields. The university also hopes to share with its *alumni* and *alumnae*—those of us who are its beloved adopted children—the wisdom that enables us to attain to an overarching moral and spiritual perspective on our world. Wisdom goes beyond learning or knowledge; it prompts us to discern or sense or taste (*sapere*, in Latin, the root of *sapientia*) how learning or knowledge should be used and how to live as perceptive and virtuous citizens of our world.<sup>2</sup>

Although I will concentrate in this lecture on how Jews, Christians and Muslims have approached higher education, it is impossible to understand how they have done so without a brief look at education in the ancient Greek world. In some mythical sense, all education began with the formation of Achilles, the hero of the *Iliad*, and the education he received from his two principal teachers, the centaur Chiron and the fully human tutor Phoenix. From the man-horse Achilles learned martial skills—hunting, horsemanship, javelin-throwing—as well as some more refined arts like playing the lyre and the practice of herbal medicine. Phoenix, an old man in the *Iliad*, reminds Achilles, who has resolved to withdraw from the army of Agamemnon on the field before Troy, how he had striven many years earlier “to make you a man of words and a man of action too.”<sup>3</sup> That is the very definition of an educated Greek citizen, someone who can participate in public discussion in a time of peace but who is also, in a time of war, ready and willing to defend the state and its deepest values. In the long run, however, the warrior must play

second fiddle to the man and—today—the woman of words. The historian Henri-Irenée Marrou characterizes ancient Greek and even Roman education as “the progressive transition from a ‘noble warrior’ culture to a ‘scribe’ culture.”<sup>4</sup>

Although the Jewish and Christian and Muslim traditions of education have diverged greatly on the detailed contents of their curricula, all three traditions have aimed to make the faithful—men first, but then women as well—intelligent and active participants in the communities that are the People of Israel, the Church of Christ and the House of Islam. Educators in these traditions have also striven to help their adherents to engage intelligently in the more secular aspects of their social settings.

## **I. HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE JEWISH TRADITION**

Just as the Greeks traced to the tutors of Achilles their educational tradition, so too Jews find evidence for education of the most basic sort in the memorialization of the founding experiences of the people of Israel. The *tefillin*, small leather boxes tied around the head and the right arm by devout Jewish men when they are praying, may serve as symbols for the most basic education in the Jewish tradition. The two passages from Exodus (13:1-10, 11-16) and two from Deuteronomy (6:4-9, 11:13-21) inserted on parchment into these boxes remind Jews of the primal experience of Israel’s identity: exodus from Egypt and entry into the Promised Land.

The most basic religious and even administrative education of ancient Israelites advanced when they developed a scribal class (*soferim*) whose duties were not military, priestly or agricultural.<sup>5</sup> This class probably developed in Israel under the influence of neighboring societies like Egypt and Mesopotamia where the scribal classes wrote in hieroglyphs or cuneiform. The alphabetic traditions of the eastern Mediterranean considerably facilitated the development of the 22-letter Hebrew alphabet and simplified the tasks of Israel’s scribes.<sup>6</sup> The Book of Proverbs

served as the handbook for such scribes. Wisdom (in Hebrew, *hokhmah*, personified as Lady Wisdom) guides not only rulers (Prov 8:15-18) but also their scribes: “O simple ones, learn prudence; acquire intelligence, you who lack it” (Prov 8.5).

In the rabbinic era of Jewish intellectual history (100 BCE to 500 CE), and especially after the Roman destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem (70 CE) and the discontinuation of priestly sacrifice, the continuity of Jewish faith was guaranteed precisely by the successors of the earlier scribes. The study of texts became the center of Jewish life and practice. Students of the Torah and the Talmud, the combination of the Mishnah (the original written version of the Oral Law) and the Gemara (the rabbinic discussions of the Oral Law), were called rabbis. Generations of rabbis variously titled (*tannaim*, *amoraim*, *geonim*) dominated Jewish intellectual and community life in Galilee at first (until about 400 CE, with the closing of the Jerusalem Talmud) and then in Babylonia (the Mesopotamian valley) until the end of the thirteenth century.

The study of Torah and Talmud was defined as a life-long obligation, not just an occupation for youth. In *Pirke Avot*—“the chapters of the fathers,” the most famous segment of the Mishnah—the devout Jew is more than once advised “to set up a master for yourself, and get yourself a companion disciple and give everyone the benefit of the doubt” (*Avot* 1:6).<sup>7</sup> This life of continuous study did not excuse the devout student from also pursuing gainful employment: “Fitting is learning in Torah along with a craft, for the labor put into the two of them makes one forget sin” (*Avot* 2:2).

Babylonia dominated Jewish life and learning for most of the first millennium; its most famous *yeshivot*—schools where students quite literally sat at the feet of rabbis—were really institutions of advanced Torah and Talmud study that were conducted in Aramaic, the lingua franca of much of the Middle East at that time.<sup>8</sup> The two most famous Babylonian academies or

*yeshivot*, located at Sura and Pumbedita in what is now Iraq, functioned from the third century to the thirteenth century.<sup>9</sup>

Although most Jewish scholars nearly two millennia ago did their intellectual and educational work in Aramaic in Galilee and then Babylonia, the Greek-speaking Jewish community in Egypt continued a Hellenistic tradition that had first typified the Temple priesthood as far back as the second century BCE. The Books of Maccabees remember these Hellenized priests with great hostility, especially their love for and participation in Greek sports.<sup>10</sup> The intellectual and educational traditions of Alexandrian Jews must not be overlooked, even if their numbers declined dramatically after the Jewish revolts, in and outside Judea, against Roman colonial rule in the late first and early second century. The most famous Hellenistic Jewish intellectual and teacher in first-century Alexandria, Philo (d. ca. 50 CE), claimed priestly descent; his typical educational tool was the allegory through which he tried to reconcile Greek philosophy with motifs from the Torah. Thus, for Philo the departure of Terah, the father of Abraham, from Ur of the Chaldeans for Haran (Gen 11:31) symbolized the departure of the inquisitive mind from the realm of astrological speculation to the more concrete knowledge of oneself: “This character Hebrews call Terah,” Philo averred, “Greeks [call] Socrates.”<sup>11</sup>

The Jewish diaspora in Spain and Egypt—and to a lesser degree in France and Italy—pursued Torah and Talmud study in the late first millennium similar to that done by Jews in Babylonia. Babylonia, however, declined as a major Jewish intellectual center in the early second millennium, possibly for the same reason that Iraq itself declined when the Sunni Arab caliphate fell under the domination of non-Arab military rulers of Persian and Turkic origins. It was then that Spain arose as the intellectual center of the Jewish diaspora, especially at the beginning of the second millennium. Educational traditions on the higher levels proved more

adventurous in Spain than in the Talmud academies in Babylonia. Spending less of their intellectual energies on *pilpul*, casuistic arguing on the fine points of religious law, the Jewish scholars of Spain took an intense interest in the Hebrew language, Hebrew poetry, and even secular subjects. The Babylonian *yeshivot* were conducted in Aramaic; the Spanish Jews sometimes used Arabic as a medium of instruction and preferred Hebrew to Aramaic. Jewish students in Spain and northwestern Africa who continued their studies beyond the basic Torah and Talmud curriculum were sometimes exposed to Greek philosophy.<sup>12</sup>

The greatest intellectual of the Spanish Jewish diaspora was undoubtedly Moshe ben Maimon—also called (in Arabic) Musa ibn Maymun, and in European languages, Maimonides (1135-1204). Although he wrote his major work, the *Mishneh Torah*, in Mishnaic Hebrew, Maimonides wrote his commentary on the Mishnah and *The Guide for the Perplexed* in Arabic, the latter trying to illuminate the mysteries of God and the Torah for non-specialist Spanish Jews whose language of education was Arabic. Maimonides is sometimes criticized for distinguishing between a simpler exegesis to be given to the pious non-intellectual and a more nuanced exegesis to be made available for the more sophisticated faithful.<sup>13</sup> Maimonides owed much of his rationalizing approach to Torah exegesis to Muslim philosophers like al-Farabi (d. ca. 950) who had suggested two centuries earlier that religious imagery—like that of the Bible or of the Qur'an—was mainly necessary for the masses, not for the philosophical ruler of an ideal society.<sup>14</sup> When less than philosophical rulers in the oppressive Almohad Muslim caliphate of Spain and northwestern Africa made life for Jews in those areas difficult in the late eleventh century, Maimonides moved to North Africa and eventually Egypt where he died in 1204.

Jewish learning in small-scale study groups, less developed than the rabbinical academies of Babylonia, continued to thrive in various parts of Europe in the later Middle Ages, the

Renaissance and Reformation eras, despite the depredations unleashed on Jewish communities during the Crusades, especially in the Rhineland. Jews survived as well in the long Ottoman era (the thirteenth through the nineteenth centuries) in southeastern Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, with the exception of the time of the messianic movement led by Sabbatai Zvi in the seventeenth century. Even when Jewish communities, east or west, suffered persecution, Jewish scholars often found it possible to move with their manuscripts and their students to safer havens where they could continue their pursuit of learning.

In eighteenth-century Germany, Jews experienced a new social acceptance and intellectual stimulation that drew some of them, at least, away from traditional learning of Torah and Talmud into the modern educational patterns of what came to be called *Haskalah*, the Jewish Enlightenment. Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786), although educated traditionally himself, advocated something much more modern for his children and their generation: a religion of laws, mainly ethical, without any revealed truths: “*I recognize no eternal truths,*” he wrote, “*other than those that are not merely comprehensible to human reason but can also be demonstrated and verified by human powers . . . I consider this an essential point of the Jewish religion and believe that this doctrine constitutes a characteristic difference between it and the Christian one. To say it briefly: I believe that Judaism knows of no revealed religion in the sense in which Christians understand this term. The Israelites possess a divine legislation.*”<sup>15</sup> One wonders what Moses Mendelssohn at the end of his life made of his six children who lived to adulthood, four of whom became Christians. Mendelssohn never lived to hear the Reformation Symphony composed by his Protestant grandson, Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy.

Jewish intellectuality and higher education since the period of the *Haskalah* have followed divergent paths, some more traditional and some more modern. The traditional Torah

and Talmud study in the rabbinic academies continues in the *yeshivot* of Orthodox Jewish communities in Israel, Europe and the Americas. Some American Jewish institutions of higher education like Yeshiva University here in New York City—usually described in religious terms as Modern Orthodox—have combined faculties of rabbinic studies with other faculties concentrating on sciences and the arts. The motto on the Great Seal of Yeshiva, *Torah u-Madda*‘ (Torah and Knowledge) proclaims the university’s double orientation to both forms of study.<sup>16</sup> It should be noted, however, that at least one distinguished former professor at Yeshiva, the late Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein (1933-2015), contested that dualistic interpretation. The Hebrew word *madda*‘, Lichtenstein maintained, has “undergone a constriction similar to that of the Latin *scientia* and its offspring . . . science.” Lichtenstein would have preferred for the Yeshiva motto *Torah u-Hokhmah* (Torah and Wisdom). “[T]he term *hokhmah* . . .,” Lichtenstein wrote, “from Scripture on [...] has retained its capacious and flexible character and also has the advantage of having been explicitly juxtaposed with Torah in the celebrated *midrash*, “If a person tells you there is *hokhmah* among the Gentiles, believe him . . . [If he tells you] there is Torah among the Gentiles, don’t believe him.”<sup>17</sup>

## II. HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION

Did Jesus go to school? Even if his spoken language was Aramaic, he must have learned enough Hebrew to be able to read from the Isaiah scroll in the local synagogue in Nazareth (Lk 4:17), unless the scroll handed to him was a *targum*, a translation into Aramaic. According to Mark, his neighbors in Nazareth were astonished at the learning he displayed, given his humble origins (Mk 6:2-3). Such learning was not entirely unlikely in that time and place; the lay movement called *Perushim* (the Pharisees) had created local synagogues where much of the religious and scholarly lives of ordinary devout Jews were centered. Luke, in the Acts of the

Apostles, maintains that Paul of Tarsus himself claimed to have studied in Jerusalem under Gamaliel (Acts 22:3), by which Luke probably means Rabban Gamaliel, a grandson of Hillel, who taught in Jerusalem in the first half of the first century. Paul himself never makes any reference to this academic pedigree in his own writings. In one of those letters, however, he insists on his authentic Jewishness, despite his birth in the diaspora, and possibly alludes to his training as a Pharisee (Phil 3:5). Paul felt some professional jealousy of a Christian teacher, the Alexandrian Jew Apollos, whose eloquence in Greek outstripped Paul's. But Paul grudgingly recognized that Apollos had a contribution to make: "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth" (1 Cor 3:5-6).

The second Christian century witnessed Greek-speaking Gentile Christians taking on leadership roles in Christian education. The saint later known as Justin Martyr (ca. 100-165) began his life as a Gentile settled near Flavia Neapolis (current Nablus in the Palestinian Territories).<sup>18</sup> Trained in Greek philosophy from his youth, Justin found himself less than satisfied by the schools of thought he had studied and converted to Christianity. At one point Justin entered into dialogue with a philosophically inclined Hellenistic Jew named Trypho, a refugee from the destruction consequent on the Bar Kokhba revolution in the years 132-135 in Palestine. Justin offered to share his faith and his philosophical confidence with Trypho: "I will prove to you, here and now, that we [Christians] do not believe in groundless myths nor in teaching not based on reason, but in doctrines that are inspired by the Divine Spirit, abundant with power, and teeming with grace."<sup>19</sup> Justin eventually met his end at Rome where he and some of his students refused to worship the gods of the imperial capital.

Christians in the Greek and Roman cultural areas tended to hand on their revealed tradition in the context of family in the earliest centuries. Although constantly upbraiding their

cultural environment for its moral shortcomings, as long as the Roman Empire lasted Christians generally attended the same schools as their non-Christian fellow citizens.<sup>20</sup> Saints Basil of Caesarea (329-79) and Gregory Nazianzen (329-90) studied together at the academy in Athens along with the future emperor, Flavius Claudius Julianus (331-63), better known as Julian the Apostate. All three studied the same Greek literary and philosophical curriculum as young men in their twenties, each of them preparing for the life of public service as a *rhetor*, something between a lawyer and a teacher.

Even though he was not yet baptized, Basil as a student in his twenties struck his classmate Gregory Nazianzen as a man of both cultivation and virtue. The two bonded for life in their mutual love for philosophy, as Gregory recalls in a eulogy he wrote after Basil's death: "And when, as time went on, we acknowledged our mutual affection, and that philosophy was our aim, we were all in all to one another, housemates, messmates, intimates, with one object in life, or an affection for each other ever growing warmer and stronger."<sup>21</sup> In his own estimate Basil felt that his piety had declined by the time he returned home from Athens to Pontus. Basil was transformed in his family environment and sought baptism; shortly afterwards he was ordained a lector. Attracted to the monastic life exemplified by his sister Macrina, Basil instituted a uniquely moderate monastic life for himself and his companions in Pontus.<sup>22</sup> Throughout his life Basil continued to praise the value of studying Greek literature. That academic formation Basil compared to the preparation of cloth before it is dyed with Christianity: "[S]o indeed must we also, if we would preserve indelible the idea of the true virtue, become first initiated in the pagan lore, then at length give special heed to the sacred and divine teachings."<sup>23</sup> Julian the Apostate, on the other hand, during his brief reign as emperor (361-363), issued a rescript banning Christians from teaching Greek literature.<sup>24</sup>

In the Latin-speaking west, Jerome (347-420) turned against the classical literature in which he had been educated, haunted by a dream in which God as his judge condemned him as “a Ciceronian not a Christian.”<sup>25</sup> His younger contemporary Augustine (354-430) also pursued an education that started with Roman literature, about which he later had misgivings: “What is more pitiable than a wretch without pity for himself who weeps over the death of Dido, dying for love of Aeneas, but not weeping over himself dying for his lack of love for you, my God.”<sup>26</sup> Unable or unwilling to apply himself to the study of Greek, Augustine eventually pursued higher studies and trained as a *rhetor* in Carthage. In reading a now lost philosophical work of Cicero, the *Hortensius*, Augustine began to long for “the immortality of wisdom with an incredible ardour in my heart.”<sup>27</sup> First converted to philosophy at the age of 18, at 19 Augustine also embraced the elitist Manichean interpretation of Christianity.<sup>28</sup> After nine years as a Manichean Christian Augustine moved away from the peculiarities of that tradition; he only embraced orthodox Christianity at Milan in 387, where he was baptized at the age of 33.

When Augustine lay dying in 430, the Vandals, originating in what is now northern and eastern Europe, were battering at the gates of Hippo; the end of the long era of Greek and Roman educational traditions was in sight, at least in the Latin West. In the same fifth century, however, a young man, a Roman citizen from either Brittany or Britain,<sup>29</sup> began the journey that led not only to the Christianization of parts of what is Western Europe today but also to the implantation of classical educational traditions there. That young man was Patrick, once a slave in Ireland and later a bishop and missionary there. Patrick probably died in 461; within a century of his death, Christian monks like Columba and Columbanus brought both Christianity and learning from Ireland, not only to the semi-Christian areas that once were part of the Roman Empire, but also to the remoter and more completely pagan areas beyond the old imperial borders. Patrick himself

is said to have combined Christianization with the beginnings of literacy among the Irish people. When adopting a disciple and future monk, it is said that Patrick “baptized [him] and wrote for him an alphabet.”<sup>30</sup>

In the early sixth century Italy still knew classical studies but the struggle between the Goths who ruled Italy and the Byzantines who wanted to oust them from the Western Empire caused an economic downturn in the old homeland of Latin civilization. Later in the same century the Lombards, another Germanic population, invaded the peninsula and totally disrupted cultural life. Henri-Irenée Marrou sums up the melancholy result: “As long as the classical tradition had lasted, sixth-century Italy had presented a picture of the same strict dualism as had been manifest in the Late Empire and the Byzantine period, between a secular education faithful to the humanism it had inherited from paganism and an ascetic religious education, violently at odds with it, supplied not by proper schools but by the clergy or the monasteries.”<sup>31</sup> A young student in Rome at the beginning of the sixth century, the Umbrian nobleman Benedict of Nursia (ca. 480-543), sought out something like the monastic life already thriving in the Christian East, but without the eccentric spiritual athleticism characterizing some of those Eastern monastic communities. Benedict moved towards this monastic life while he was a student, not very talented, of classical literature in Rome around the year 500. Alienated from the worldliness of his fellow students, Benedict wanted to withdraw to the countryside. Whatever the limitations of Benedict’s own classical education, the monks and eventually nuns in his foundations undertook lives of prayer and also of scholarly industry, preserving for later ages even some of the more profane elements of Greek and Roman culture.

Monasteries and cathedral schools for the formation of clerics preserved elements of classical education in the seventh century and afterwards, but the general education of European lay people declined in the period between the seventh and the twelfth centuries. Mendicant religious orders like the Dominicans in the early thirteenth century committed themselves to a

learned ministry of preaching and teaching, as the legacy of Thomas Aquinas suggests. Even the Franciscans, originally rooted in an illiterate peasant movement, learned the value of higher education early on, especially under the influence of Bonaventure. Medieval universities—many of them starting as consortia of cathedral schools and mendicant order *studia*—developed from the twelfth century on. These universities started as professional schools, preparing students to specialize not only in theology but also in such lay fields as law and medicine, disciplines called *scientiae lucrativae*, the sciences that pay well. Paris and Oxford—and even the first American university, Harvard, founded in 1636—began as training schools for future clergy, and only later developed the lucrative sciences. By modern times, however, Paris, Oxford and Harvard have moved away from clerical formation as a principal aim, although Oxford still has a Faculty of Theology and Religion and Harvard has a Divinity School.<sup>32</sup>

What later centuries have called the Renaissance, stimulated at least in part by the rediscovery of Greek learning emanating from the Byzantine Christian East, began in Italy in the fourteenth century and extended through most of Europe until the sixteenth century, the era of the Protestant and Catholic reformations. Very different from the medieval universities were the humanistic schools that developed in the fifteenth century in Italy, institutions aimed at forming young people in *studia humanitatis*.<sup>33</sup> Unlike the profession-oriented universities, the humanistic schools aimed to make the student a *rhetor*, as had the academy of Athens a millennium earlier, an eloquent and cultured participant in civil society. I will return to these humanistic schools and to universities in the conclusion.

### **III. HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE MUSLIM TRADITION**

The Muslim tradition of learning takes off with the Qur'an, God's word experienced by Muhammad and his followers in seventh-century Mecca: "We have sent among you a messenger

who is one of you to recite for you our wonders. He purifies you and teaches you the Book and the Wisdom; he teaches you what you did not know. Remember Me, then, and I will remember you. Show Me your gratitude and do not spurn Me” (Qur’an 2:151-52). For Muslims, the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament are only defective versions of the one Word of God delivered through past messengers of God, among them Abraham, Moses and Jesus. That Word of God, in the Muslim understanding of it, was often distorted in the generations after it was revealed and proclaimed. This explains for Muslims the sometimes divergent ways in which a story is told in the Bible and in the Qur’an. For Muslims, and especially for those of the majority Sunni adherence, the Qur’an is God’s uncreated Word from all eternity, finally and indefectibly revealed to Muhammad in the seventh century, but not dating as such from that century.

Within the first few years after Muhammad’s death (632) there developed a class of professional reciters of the Qur’an—*qurra’* (plural)—whose job description was considerably modified by the publication of the full text of the Qur’an by the caliph ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan (r. 644-656). With the passing of the generation that knew Muhammad, there developed another class of religious professionals called traditionists—*muhaddithun* (plural)—recorders of words uttered by Muhammad or deeds performed by him arranged by topics, from the most sublime to the most pedestrian. The students of such tradition (*hadith*) traveled broadly, especially in the Arab world, trying to verify the sayings and deeds attributed to Muhammad by tracing the line of transmission (*isnad*) for each item of information (*matn*) about Muhammad so handed down.<sup>34</sup>

Gradually a class of scholars (*‘ulama’*, practitioners of *‘ilm*, knowledge) developed, concentrating on the central intellectual discipline of the Muslim world, *fiqh*, a term loosely translated as jurisprudence. Deriving Muslim legal traditions from the text of the Qur’an and *hadith* adjudged to be sound, legal scholars or jurists (*fuqaha’*) could sometimes reach

new legal conclusions by analogy (*qiyas*).<sup>35</sup> More controversially, many legal scholars also allowed the admissibility of *ra'y* into legal judgments, the personal legal opinion of reputed scholars when the matter under discussion was not specifically treated in the Qur'an or in well-authenticated prophetic *hadith*.<sup>36</sup> Gradually, over the eighth and ninth centuries, traditions of legal thought developed in Sunni circles; there once were many such traditions, but four major ones survive into modern times: the Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i and Hanbali schools of legal thought.

Much attention has been paid in recent times to those schools Muslims call *madaris* in Arabic, the plural of *madrasa*.<sup>37</sup> There are various levels of education referred to by the term *madrasa*, but the highest level usually denotes a Muslim law school, usually one that privileges one or other of the four legal traditions of Sunni Islam but also does some comparative Islamic law.<sup>38</sup> Some of these Muslim law schools in recent decades have taken very rigorist points of view in the jurisprudence they teach, heavily influenced by the neo-Hanbali (so-called "Wahhabi") legal tradition of Saudi Arabia, a major benefactor of such schools. The law schools in Deoband in India have provided juristic training for many of the Afghani and Pakistani *mujahidun* who have pursued the struggle against more moderate Muslims and their foreign allies over the past decade or more.<sup>39</sup> It must be emphasized that not every law *madrasa* in the world follows this neo-Hanbali legal tradition.

The transfer of the capital of the Muslim world from Medina to Damascus less than three decades after Muhammad's death introduced Arab Muslims to Greek and Syriac traditions of governmental practice as well as to late Hellenistic legal, philosophical and theological discourse. Civil servants or secretaries (*kuttab*, literally, writers), many of them non-Arabs who had worked for the Byzantines, influenced the Umayyad caliphs who ruled from Damascus (ca. 658-750). With the collapse of the Umayyad regime, however, another dynasty, the 'Abbasids,

came to rule the Muslim world. They transferred their political capital further east, building the new city of Baghdad in Mesopotamia. There the ‘Abbasid caliphs gradually took to imitating Persian imperial splendor, delegating more and more of their power to military and civilian personnel. Elite Muslims at this time came to admire Hellenistic learning as it was preserved in Mesopotamia, often by Nestorian Christians exiled from the Byzantine Empire.

In the early ‘Abbasid period the caliph al-Mansur (r. 754-775) hired a Persian Nestorian Christian, George Bokhtishu’, as his court physician, and his descendants kept that appointment for another century. Bokhtishu’ was not trained in medicine in the modern sense but was formed in the natural and medical sciences, more theoretical than experimental, derived from Aristotle and Galen. *Falsafa*—a word quite obviously borrowed from the Greek *philosophia*—included much more than what is called philosophy today, including not only logic and metaphysics but also mathematics, astronomy, astrology, medicine and even alchemy. The ‘Abbasid caliph al-Ma’mun (r. 813-833) sponsored the *Bayt al-hikma* (‘House of Wisdom’) at Baghdad for translating Greek sources into Arabic by scholars like Hunayn b. Ishaq (808-873), a Christian who created much of the early scientific and philosophic vocabulary of Arabic.

*Falsafa* never had a large following, but it did have a highly educated Muslim clientele for whom it provided a worldview and educational tradition different from that of normative, law-centered Islam. Looking at the universe, the *faḥḥāṣif* tried to discover what it was made up of, rather than Who made it. The Muslims who were first attracted to philosophy had available to them no orderly history of Greek philosophy and consequently mixed elements of Platonic, Aristotelian, Stoic and Pythagorean thought into something of a new amalgam. *Falsafa* posed great intellectual problems for faithful Muslims. As an Aristotelian the *faḥḥāṣif* rejected any notion of a beginning or end of the universe: the Aristotelian God and that God’s universe were

co-eternal, with the latter contingent on but not created by the former at any moment in time. This Aristotelian God also existed without changing, and could not, therefore, know and judge particular beings like you and me, since the process of coming to know and judge particulars changes the Knower from not-knowing to knowing. Finally, there could be no such thing as a day of judgment at the end of time because time and the universe were eternal.<sup>40</sup>

*Falsafa* attracted several major thinkers in the Sunni Muslim world between the year 800 and the year 1200: al-Farabi, Ibn Sina ('Avicenna'), and Ibn Rushd ('Averroes'), to mention only the most famous. Some blame for the decline of *falsafa* in the Sunni world (it was different in Shi'i settings) must be placed at the door of the great Sunni scholar Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (1058-1111), a dominant intellectual figure in Baghdad in the late eleventh century. Ghazali had once combined with his legal teaching not a little philosophical and theological speculation. But when a crisis of faith came over him in the 1090s, he withdrew from his academic post in Baghdad and took up the life of a wandering Sufi, a mystic in the Islamic tradition. One of his major works, *Tahafut al-falasifa* ("The Incoherence of the Philosophers") has exercised a major effect on later generations of Sunnis, discouraging them from involvement in *falsafa*. Ibn Rushd ('Averroes'), who combined a somewhat private career as a devotee of philosophy in Almohad-ruled Morocco and Spain with a public career as a legal scholar, answered Ghazali's attack on philosophy with his own acerbic *Tahafut al-tahafut* ("The Incoherence of the Incoherence"). But the prestige of Ghazali outweighed that of Ibn Rushd over the next few centuries in the Sunni world. In thirteenth-century Paris, however, Latin translations of Ibn Rushd's major works encouraged the endeavors of the scholars called the Latin Averroists and even earned for him the sobriquet "the Commentator" for his work on Aristotle from Thomas Aquinas.

Little more was made of *falsafa* in the Sunni world until the nineteenth century. It reentered that world through the influence of Jamal al-din al-Afghani (1838-1897), only apparently a native of Afghanistan and a Sunni Muslim. In actual fact Afghani was an Iranian Shi'i hiding his identity in pursuit of his scheme to unite all Muslims against European colonial hegemony in the Muslim world. Afghani fathered Muslim Modernism of the early twentieth century. During one of his sojourns in Egypt in 1871, Afghani took private students from among the scholars studying at the staid Azhar Mosque University in Cairo, including the man who eventually personified Muslim Modernism in Egypt, Muhammad 'Abduh (1849-1905). Afghani's motives were modernizing and may have owed more to his hidden Shi'i background. "The science that has the position of a comprehensive soul and the rank of a preserving force is the science of *falsafa* or philosophy," Afghani wrote. "It is philosophy that shows man human prerequisites. It shows the sciences what is necessary. It employs each of the sciences in its proper place."<sup>41</sup> For Afghani Islam, reified as an ideal set of beliefs and practices rather than lived as a surrender of self to God, perfectly fulfilled the definition of a civilizing religion.

In the Muslim world since the time of Afghani, a great deal of attention has been paid to modern scientific education, sometimes to the detriment of a modern religious and philosophical education. Afghani would not have liked the typical modern rigorist Sunni, a highly-trained civil engineer (like Usama ibn Ladin) or a medical doctor (like Ayman al-Zawahiri) with some simplistic ideas of what constitutes genuine Islam.

I cannot sufficiently emphasize that universities in contemporary Muslim countries feature syllabi not that different from those of contemporary American and European universities, even if they may teach Islamic legal disciplines in separate faculties. A favorite saying attributed to Muhammad justifies these secular studies: "Seek out learning, even if it is in

China.” Some of these contemporary universities in Muslim countries owe their origins to colonial educational establishments; many more have developed more recently in wealthier Muslim countries like the Gulf States in close collaboration with European and American universities.

#### IV. WISDOM AND LEARNING AT FORDHAM PAST AND PRESENT

The first ten Jesuits—including a non-traditional student of 37 named Inigo Lopez de Loyola—studied together at the University of Paris between 1528 and 1535; they were all pursuing a professional course in scholastic philosophy with some theology thrown in to prepare them for future careers as priests.<sup>42</sup> Unlike his fellow students, Inigo—who changed his name to Ignatius in Paris—had to overcome considerable deficiencies in his previous education. Ignatius had only begun to study Latin, the language of university education, with boys two decades younger than he when he was already 33. That beginning of his post-primary education left a permanent mark on his imagination. He later made sure that young Jesuits in formation—and eventually lay students as well—went through a systematic humanistic training in grammar, literature and rhetoric. Philosophy, including the Aristotelian natural sciences, was studied at the university level, as was theology.

Forty-three years after the death of Ignatius, Claudio Acquaviva, the fifth Superior General of the Jesuits, issued in 1599 an educational schematization of this process—*Ratio atque Institutio Studiorum Societatis Jesu*, usually called the *Ratio Studiorum*. That educational schematization derived from the experience of the first forty years of Jesuit education on all levels, beginning with the first Jesuit school founded at Messina in Sicily in 1548, an institution that offered its students, lay and Jesuit, a humanistic education preparing them for literate public life. The Roman College—later renamed the Gregorian University—was the first Jesuit

university, concentrating on philosophy and theology on the higher levels, but also educating younger students in humanistic studies.

Saint John's College in the Manor of Fordham and the County of Westchester, as it then was, did not begin its history in 1841 as a Jesuit institution but as a New York Catholic diocesan college. The founder, Bishop (later Archbishop) John Hughes, seemed happy, at least at first, to sell the College in 1846 to a largely French group of Jesuits. His happiness did not always continue. Those Jesuits who came to St. John's College in 1846 were members of a religious order that had only risen from the dead in 1814, after a forty-one year period of papal suppression.<sup>43</sup> When Jesuit education began again after the suppression, it was reconstructed on the *Ratio Studiorum* as a document, rather than on a lived tradition. This sometimes made nineteenth-century and even early twentieth Jesuit education at Fordham seem somewhat antiquarian.<sup>44</sup>

One cannot understand the educational model of nineteenth-century Fordham without realizing that many students began their Fordham studies in the Third Division, the last years of elementary school, something like junior high school today. This was followed by three to five years in the Second Division or Junior School—what is today called Fordham Preparatory School. On those two lower levels students learned not only the rudiments of Latin, Greek and English grammar but also literature in those languages. They also studied mathematics and natural philosophy—no longer so Aristotelian as that sounds, but a field demanding laboratories. Training in penmanship was imparted on the lowest level and drawing, including architectural drawing, was taught on the intermediate level. Tuition in French, Spanish, Italian and Hebrew was available for an extra fee.<sup>45</sup> At Fordham College, the First Division, students underwent further training in classical Greek and Latin literature and scholastic philosophy.

I once asked a Jesuit political scientist with a doctorate from Yale, a 1938 alumnus of Fordham College at Rose Hill, whether he had majored in political science as an undergraduate. He laughed and said that he and all of his classmates in the late 1930s majored in philosophy. It may surprise you to know that there was no graduate program in theology at Fordham University until 1964, although two-credit courses, always taught by Jesuits, were required each semester of a four-year undergraduate program.<sup>46</sup> One of the most dramatic changes at Fordham over the past half century or more has been the development of a professional curriculum, undergraduate and graduate, in the Department of Theology. Several Graduate Schools have also developed and remained at Fordham since the early twentieth century: Law, Social Service, Education, Arts and Sciences, Business and the uniquely pastoral and distinctly international Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education.

Fordham undergraduate education has changed a great deal over the period since World War II. It is still possible for some to major in philosophy at Fordham and to pursue graduate studies in that discipline. Undergraduates are now exposed to a wider range of academic fields today than they were in times past, some of which may prepare them for post-university careers. But the ideals of *studia humanitatis* and more professional training on the university level remain in the core curriculum. No one finishes any undergraduate college at Fordham without some exposure to philosophy, theology, literature, history, the natural and social sciences.

The aims of humanistic studies and of university education overlap. They do not differ entirely from the ideal of education first expressed by Phoenix, the tutor of Achilles, paraphrased to fit modern times: to develop students as men and women of words and men and women of action too. John Henry Newman expressed the end of liberal university education in a more Victorian idiom, but with basically the same intent: “Liberal education,” he wrote, “makes not

the Christian, not the Catholic, but the gentleman.” In modern times we might like to say “the gentle man and the gentle woman,” people who bring honor to their *gens*, their extended family lineage in the old Latin sense. “It is well to be a gentleman,” Newman continues, “it is well to have a cultivated intellect, a delicate taste, a candid, equitable, dispassionate mind, a noble and courteous bearing in the conduct of life;—these are the connatural qualities of a large knowledge; they are the objects of a University.”<sup>47</sup> Father Pedro Arrupe, the Superior General of the Jesuits from 1965 to 1983, influenced by the characterization of Jesus as “the man for others” by the German Lutheran theologian and martyr, Dietrich Bonhöffer,<sup>48</sup> added something new to the educational ideals proposed by Phoenix and Newman. Arrupe wanted education in the Jesuit tradition to produce “men and women for others.”<sup>49</sup>

These aims apply not only to Christian students but also to Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists and those with no religious commitment at all who study in Jesuit colleges and universities anywhere in the world. As a matter of fact, most of the students in Asian Jesuit colleges and universities are not Christians. There is a continuity between the ideal set for Achilles by Phoenix, what an updated Newman might mean by gentle men and gentle women, and the more self-sacrificing ideal proposed by Father Arrupe. We live in the hope that our students understand not only the *doctrina* or learning communicated in our classrooms, libraries and laboratories at Fordham, but also that they grow in the ability to taste or discern or sense the Wisdom—*Sapientia*—that permeates the university as a whole. It is the Wisdom that comes down from on high that urges them to become men and women for others.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> All quotations from the Bible come from the *New Revised Standard Version* (1989). My colleague, Joseph T. Lienhard, S.J., has pointed out to me two other instances in the Vulgate Latin version of the Hebrew Bible in which the words *sapientia* and *doctrina* are in close proximity: “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: fool despise wisdom and instruction [*sapientiam atque doctrinam*] (Prov 1:7); “Buy truth, and do not sell it; buy wisdom, instruction, and understanding [*sapientiam et doctrinam et intellegentiam*] (Prov 23:23).

<sup>2</sup> My predecessor in the McGinley Chair, Avery Cardinal Dulles, S.J., shared his own reflections on the Fordham motto in *Inside Fordham: Fordham News*, September 11, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> The English rendition comes from Homer, *The Iliad*, tr. Robert Fagles (New York: Viking Penguin, 1990), 266. The Greek original can be found in *Iliad* 9:442.

<sup>4</sup> Henri-Irenée Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, tr. George Lamb (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, n.d., original English edition, Sheed and Ward, 1956), xiv. This book will be further cited as Marrou.

<sup>5</sup> The Chronicler numbers such scribes among the first Israelite settlers in the Promised Land: “the families of the scribes that lived at Jabez” (1 Chr 2:55).

<sup>6</sup> See Aaron Demsky, “Education, Jewish: In the Biblical Period,” *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), 6: 162-69, esp. 167-68. This Encyclopaedia will be cited further as *EJ* 2. See also Aaron Demsky, “Scribe,” *EJ* 2, 18:212-13.

<sup>7</sup> *Torah from the Sages: Pirke Avot*, tr. Jacob Neusner (Dallas, TX: Rossel Books, 1983), 30.

<sup>8</sup> These academies and their devotees sometimes even claimed origins for their sitting at the feet of rabbis in the supposed practice of the patriarchs of the pre-Mosaic era. See Moshe Beer, “Academies in Babylonia and Erez Israel,” *EJ* 2, 1:347-51.

<sup>9</sup> Sura was located west of the Euphrates near the Persian capital of Ctesiphon and went into decline from the fifth century. Pumbedita was located at what is Fallujah in modern Iraq, although it eventually migrated to Baghdad, the seat of the Sunni Muslim caliphate, where it survived until the thirteenth century. On Sura, see Eliezer Bashan (Sternberg), “Sura,” *EJ* 2, 19:316-17. On Pumbedita, see Moshe Beer and Eliezer Bashan, “Pumbedita,” *EJ* 2, 16: 733-734.

<sup>10</sup> “[T]he priests were no longer intent upon their service at the altar . . . Despising the sanctuary and neglecting the sacrifices, they hurried to take part in the unlawful proceedings in the wrestling arena after the signal for the discus-throwing” (2 Macc 4:14).

<sup>11</sup> Philo, “On Dreams,” I: 58, in Philo, *On Flight and Finding. On the Change of Names. On Dreams*, tr. F. H. Folson, G.H. Whitaker. The Loeb Classical Library, 275. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1934), V: 327.

<sup>12</sup> Judah ibn Tibbon (1120-90), a scholar in Spain and France, advised his son to perfect his Arabic: “As you know, the great men of our people did not achieve their high position except through their knowledge of Arabic.” See Ibn Tibbon as quoted by Elijah Bortniker, “Education, Jewish: In the Middle Ages,” *EJ* 2: 6:173.

<sup>13</sup> “The Law,” Maimonides wrote, “also makes a call to adopt certain beliefs, belief in which is necessary for political welfare. Such, for instance is our belief that He, may he be exalted, is violently angry with those who disobey Him.” See *The Guide of the Perplexed*, III.28, tr. Shlomo Pines (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963), 2:512.

<sup>14</sup> “Now these [theoretical and practical] things are *philosophy* when they are in the soul of the legislator. They are religion when they are in the souls of the multitude.” See *Alfarabi’s Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle*, tr. Muhsin Mahdi (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1961), 47.

<sup>15</sup> Moses Mendelssohn, *Jerusalem, or On Religious Power and Judaism*, tr. Alan Arkush (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England for Brandeis University Press, 1983), 89-90. Italics in the English translation.

<sup>16</sup> A former chancellor of Yeshiva, Norman Lamm, wrote a book precisely on this subject *Torah Umadda: the Encounter of Religious Learning and Worldly Knowledge in the Jewish Tradition* (Northvale, NY and London: Jason Aronson Inc., 1990).

<sup>17</sup> Aharon Lichtenstein, “Torah and General Culture: Confluence and Conflict,” in *Judaism’s Encounter with Other Cultures: Rejection or Integration*, ed. Jacob J. Schacter (Northvale, NJ and Jerusalem: Jason Aronson Inc., 1997), 220, n. 1.

<sup>18</sup> Flavia Neapolis was a Roman colony in Samaria first created by the emperor Vespasian after the Roman conquest and destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in the year 70.

<sup>19</sup> St. Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, tr. Thomas B. Falls, revised by Thomas P. Halton, ed. Michael Slusser (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003), 17.

<sup>20</sup> Marrou, 315-16.

<sup>21</sup> Gregory Nazianzen, “Oration 43: Funeral Oration on the Great S[aint] Basil, Bishop of Caesarea,” Paragraph 19, Translated by Charles Gordon Browne and James Edward Swallow. From *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series*, Vol. 7. Edited by Philip Schaff

and Henry Wade. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1894.) Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight. <<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/310243.htm>>

<sup>22</sup> W. H. C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 630. This book is hereafter cited as Frend.

<sup>23</sup> Basil, *Address to Young Men on the Right Use of Greek Literature*, in Frederick Morgan Padelford, *Essays on the Study and Use of Poetry by Plutarch and Basil the Great* (New Haven: Yale Studies in English 15, 1902), 103. I am indebted to my graduate assistant, Allen Wilson, for directing my attention to this text.

<sup>24</sup> Frend, 604.

<sup>25</sup> Jerome, *Letter 22 to Eustochium*, 30, in *Selected Letters of St. Jerome*, tr. F.A. Wright. The Loeb Classical Library. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press and London: William Heinemann, 1933, rpt. 1963), 127.

<sup>26</sup> Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, tr. Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, rpt. 2008), 15 (I.13).

<sup>27</sup> *Confessions*, 39 (III.7).

<sup>28</sup> Frend, 660.

<sup>29</sup> Either Brittany or the coast of Britain.

<sup>30</sup> *Et baptizavit Patricius filium, et scripsit abgitorium, et benedixit eum benedictione episcopi:* See *The Tripartite Life of Patrick with other Documents Relating to that Saint*, ed. Whitley Stokes. *Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores*, 89 (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1887), 2:328 (line 27).

<sup>31</sup> Marrou, 347.

<sup>32</sup> Since the two-decade presidency at Harvard of James Bryant Conant (1933-1953) and, more dramatically, since the briefer presidency of Lawrence Summers (2001-2006), the training of candidates for Christian ministry at the Harvard Divinity School has taken a back seat to the formation of scholars in the academic study of religion. On Conant's hostility to Harvard Divinity School, see George Hunston Williams, *Calm Rising: Through Change and Through Storm: the Contours of Religion and Commitment in an Age of Upheaval and Globalization*, Volume 3 of *Divinings: Religion at Harvard from its Origins in New England*, ed. Rodney L. Petersen (Bristol, CT: Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 224. On Summers and the Harvard Divinity School see Stephen M. Marks, "On a Mission from God: Summers Challenges the Divinity School to Redefine its Focus," *The Harvard Crimson* (June 5, 2003).

<sup>33</sup> There is considerable literature on the difference between medieval university studies and Renaissance-era *studia humanitatis*. See John W. O'Malley, S.J., "From the 1599 *Ratio Studiorum* to the Present: A Humanistic Tradition," in *The Jesuit Ratio Studiorum: 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Perspectives* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), 127-44. This book will be cited below as Duminuco.

<sup>34</sup> Many collections of such tradition proliferated in the early centuries of Islam but the two most respected by all Sunni Muslims were both compiled in the ninth century, the *Sahih* of al-Bukhari (810-870), an Uzbek collector of prophetic traditions, and the *Sahih* of Muslim (ca. 821-875), an Iranian.

<sup>35</sup> Thus, to give a simple example, the Quranic prohibition on drinking wine was extended analogously to the use of all other intoxicants.

<sup>36</sup> See Jeanette Wakin and A. Zysow, “RA’Y,” *The Encyclopaedia of Islam: New Edition*, ed. P. J. Bearman et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 12: 687b-690b. Henceforth this source will be referred to as *EI 2*.

<sup>37</sup> The word *madrasa* is consistently misspelled and mispronounced in the American media as “madrassa.” Eight years ago some people suggested that President Obama had attended a *madrasa* as a child in Indonesia; in fact he spent the first through the fourth grades in two primary schools in Jakarta: Santo Fransiskus Asisi Sekolah, a Catholic school, and, more briefly, the Besuki School, a non-sectarian private primary school where they now proudly have a most un-Islamic statue of him as a ten-year-old.

<sup>38</sup> See J. Pedersen and George Makdisi, “MADRASA,” *EI 2*, 5:1122a-1134b. For more on the *madrasa*, see the magisterial works of George Makdisi, *The Rise of the Colleges: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981) and *The Rise of Humanism in Classical Islam and the Christian West* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990).

<sup>39</sup> The school of Islamic disciplines (*Dar al-‘Ulum*) at Deoband, and other *madaris* related to it in northern India, have proven fairly stringent in their interpretation of Islam. See Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Modern Islam in India: A Social Analysis*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1963, rpt. 1969), 363-64. These schools in Deoband have in the three decades since the Soviet and then the American-NATO invasions of Afghanistan encouraged some of their students (*taliban*), especially those who were Afghani refugees, to join the struggle (*jihad*) against foreign occupation. Although originally quite distinct in their religious orientation, some of these Deobandi *taliban* have joined politically with Jama‘at-i-Islami, the Pakistani political

disciples of the late Mawlana Mawdudi (d. 1979). See Juan Cole, *Engaging the Muslim World* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 171-72.

<sup>40</sup> See Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), I: 427-28.

<sup>41</sup> “Lecture on Teaching and Learning” in Nikki R. Keddie, *An Islamic Response to Imperialism: Political and Religious Writings of Sayyid Jamal ad-Din “al-Afghani”* (Berkeley-Los Angeles-London: University of California Press, 1968, rpt. 1983), 104. Not every aspect of modern philosophy and science appealed to Afghani. He found the ideas of Darwin circulating in the Muslim world, and perhaps especially the social Darwinism that explained the dominance of colonialists over the colonized in pseudo-scientific evolutionary terms. Afghani wrote in Persian a defense of religion as an element meant to stabilize and civilize human society.

<sup>42</sup> Paris differed from other contemporary universities by the systematic way philosophy and theology were taught, what was called the *modus parisiensis*. That came down to beginning at the beginning and continuing through the middle to the end of a course of study. Universities other than Paris invited students on arrival to dive in at whatever stage in the full conspectus of a course in philosophy or theology professors were lecturing. See Gabriel Codina, S.J., “The ‘Modus Parisiensis,’” in Duminuco, 28-49.

<sup>43</sup> The papal suppression of the Jesuits was countermanded in the Russian Empire by Catherine the Great. See William J. Bangert, S.J., *A History of the Society of Jesus*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Revised (St. Louis, MO: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1986), 363-430.

<sup>44</sup> As late as 1941, the then Rector-President of the University, Robert I. Gannon, S.J., excoriated the “electivism” of Harvard’s undergraduate curriculum. “We are too devoted to eternal principles to be entirely pragmatic, and we are too impressed by all the wisdom of the human

race ever to have our school ignore the past . . . Any civilization is ninety per cent heirlooms, lessons and memories,. We need the past; we need it terribly.” Gannon as quoted in Thomas J. Shelley, *Fordham: A History of the Jesuit University of New York: 1841-2003* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016), 309.

<sup>45</sup> Much of this description of the Third Division and the Second Division I have received orally from Mr. Louis DiGiorno, a teacher at Fordham Preparatory School, who has taken a scholarly interest in the origins of the School.

<sup>46</sup> See the undergraduate course prospectus entitled *Fordham College: A Liberal Arts College for Men, 1956-1958* (Bronx, NY: Fordham University, n.d.).

<sup>47</sup> John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University*, ed. Frank M. Turner (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1996), 89.

<sup>48</sup> In the outline of a book Bonhöffer hoped to write if he survived prison, he first used the phrase: “The transcendent is not infinite and unattainable tasks, but the neighbour who is within reach in any given situation. God in human form—not, as in the oriental religions, in animal form, monstrous, chaotic, remote, and terrifying, nor in the conceptual forms of the absolute, metaphysical, infinite, etc., nor yet in the Greek divine-human form of ‘man in himself’; but ‘the man for others’, and therefore the Crucified, the man who lives out of the transcendent.” See Dietrich Bonhöffer, *Letter and Papers from Prison* (The Enlarged Edition), ed. Eberhard Bethge, tr. Reginald Fuller, Frank Clarke, John Bowden and others (New York; Macmillan, 1972), 381-82.

<sup>49</sup> Arrupe originally used the phrase “men for others” in 1973, since he was addressing a largely male audience of Jesuit alumni at Valencia in Spain. The phrase has been amended in later presentations of that address to be more inclusive. See Pedro Arrupe, S.J., “Men and Women for

Others,” available online at <http://onlineministries.creghton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/men-for-others.html>.

“Jewish Higher Education”  
Jewish Response to the 2016 Fall McGinley Lecture  
Professor Magda Teter, Ph.D.  
Shvidler Chair in Judaic Studies, Fordham University

The question of Jewish education is complex: are we speaking about the education of Jews, or is it education in Jewish subjects? Or related to Jewish “identity”?

Pre-modern educational institutions were confessional. Universities established in medieval Europe were institutions of Christian learning. Jews were excluded from the majority of them until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In fact, the Council of Basel issued a canon on September 7, 1434, prohibiting “Jews and other infidels” from being “admitted to any academic degrees.”<sup>1</sup> Yet, despite this prohibition several universities, especially on the Italian peninsula, admitted Jews to the ranks of their students, especially in the field of medicine. The University of Padua was most notable in its matriculation of Jews. Between 1517 and 1721, 228 Jews earned doctorates from that university.

Jewish religious education was taught among Jews in private smaller settings of *yeshivot*, or among Christians at universities, but here its purpose was polemical and conversionary. The same Council of Basel stated that: “Since this preaching will be more fruitful in proportion to the linguistic skill of the preachers, we decree that there must be faithful observance of the constitution of the council of Vienne, which ordered the provision in certain universities of teachers of the Hebrew, Arabic, Greek and Chaldean languages.”<sup>2</sup> Neither in the case of premodern Jewish education, nor in the case of teaching Jewish subjects at Christian universities was there a question of Jewish identity. The sense of Jewish identity was not threatened before the modern era, when the question of Jewish education became different.

In the modern period, the political transformations that reshaped the legal framework of the states from premodern corporative structure to a modern model of individual citizenship challenged Europeans’ sense of identity and also reshaped approaches to higher education. Europeans, Jewish and non-Jewish, were seeking new bonds that went beyond the legal bonds of estate and religion. This new process is exemplified in the writing of history. In his introduction to the *History of the Latin and Germanic Nations*, Leopold von Ranke promised to “keep close to the racially kindred nations either of Germanic or Germanic-Latin descent, whose history,” for

Ranke, was “the core of recent history.” He promised to touch only in passing on “what is foreign” and thus peripheral. In Ranke’s eyes, these Germanic nations developed “in unity and in common enterprise.” Jews, thus, though they had lived among those “Germanic and Germanic Latin nations” for centuries, were effectively excluded from the story.<sup>3</sup> And just as history came to serve nation building, so too did the new approach to higher education, which became increasingly focused on the service to the state. Universities were charged in educating future bureaucrats, national educators, and useful citizens. Moreover, religious education was also increasingly sanctioned by the state.

For Jews these new developments meant new challenges, also in education. Because in modern universities topics of study were structured to aid nation-building, Jews, while no longer excluded from enrollment, would not feel they truly belonged there. Moreover, in a new modern state, in which legal boundaries no longer defined Jewish identity and community, new questions about identity were raised: Were they French Jews, or Jewish Frenchmen? Were they German Jews or Jewish Germans? What did Jewishness mean? What should Jewish education look like?

From the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, debates over Jewish education raged. Should it be *Torah* only? That is religious education alone. Or should it be *Torah u-madda*’, religious learning and secular knowledge, or *Madda’ ve-Torah*, secular learning first and then religious learning?<sup>4</sup> Moreover, states began to require certain training for rabbinic positions. In 1797 for example, the edict of toleration in Bohemia required rabbis to have a university education. Under the Habsburg monarchy it became sometimes difficult to fill rabbinic posts because of those requirements.

But the question of Jewish identity continued to be important. Excluded from the story taught at the universities; challenged by new intellectual and political trends, Jewish intellectuals turned to writing the history of the Jews. They sought to respond to the fast changing world by anchoring Jewish identity in a national historical narrative of their own. They founded the society for the study of Judaism, or *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. Many of those scholars were trained at German secular universities and applied modern tools to the study of Jews. None found employment in their fields at secular European universities. Some turned to their energy to training rabbis for the modern world.

One of the earliest such institutions was the Jewish Theological Seminary in Breslau, now Wrocław in Poland, which opened in 1854 and sought to prepare rabbis and Jewish teachers. It required of its students adherence to traditional Judaism, while applying the new

tools of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* to their training. Its curriculum included: talmudic literature, history and exegesis, philosophy of religion, homiletics and Midrash, and the calendar. Most of its professors held a degree from German universities, for example, Jakob Bernays, who taught philosophy, from University of Bonn, or Heinrich Graetz, the preeminent historian from the University of Jena. In 1855, in London Jews' College was founded, its function to train rabbis and community leaders. In 1881, the College relocated near University College, to help its students combine secular and religious education; in 1904 it affiliated with the University of London.

In the United States, too, Jewish institutions of higher learning emerged in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1875, the Reform Hebrew Union College (HUC) was founded in Cincinnati. It trained Reform rabbis. The seal of HUC at the time showed a seven-armed candlestick with Hebrew words above "Seal the Torah upon my disciples!" and below "The morning has dawned."<sup>5</sup> The Reform HUC saw itself as an institution that was providing training for religious leaders ready for new challenges of modernity. As the president of HUC wrote in 1917, explaining the context: "Then came the trumpet blast of liberty, at which the walls of the Ghetto tumbled down, and with these also the medieval fences and witnesses of the Law. A trying period arrived for the ancient heritage of the Jew. Dazzled by the light of modern culture, thousands turned their back upon their ancestral faith."<sup>6</sup> Facing this challenge Hebrew Union College was intended to be

an institution of learning which stands for the progress, the enlightenment and elevation of Jew and Judaism in America. And, behold, with the limited means at its disposal it has achieved astonishing results; it consolidated the forces of progress and sent forth all over the land an army of workers in the cause of Judaism, enthusiastic, earnest and resourceful, who achieved great successes in the field of education and philanthropy as well as religion, so as to win many hearts for the cause of Reform; it gave the American congregations many pulpit orators, whose eloquence commanded the attention of Jew and non-Jew alike, and kindled love and zeal for Judaism in the rising generation.<sup>7</sup>

The new seminary and its practices were not uncontroversial. When the first class of rabbis graduated, its reception included non-kosher food, a statement that reflected debates over the historical validity of Jewish dietary laws. But the Reform movement was quite successful, spurring a reaction. In 1886, Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) was formed. While JTS started as an Orthodox institution it then became a flagship for the Conservative movement, which became a mid-way between Reform and Orthodoxy. When Solomon Schachter took over the Seminary in 1902 in New York, he found that it was "amidst all the Judaisms and no-Judaisms" of the great city that he and his colleagues were called upon to "create a theological centre which should be all things to all men, reconciling all parts and appealing to all sections of the community."<sup>8</sup> The four-year instruction covered: "all branches of Jewish literature, Bible, Apocrypha, Talmud, Midrash, Codes, Liturgy, Homiletics, including a proper training in public speaking and pastoral work, Hazanuth and ceremonial practices, Jewish Ethics and Jewish Philosophy, Theology, Jewish History and Jewish Mysticism, and even Jewish Folklore," as well as "the duties of the Rabbi and on philanthropic topics."<sup>9</sup> Soon, the Seminary, which was tuition free, partnered with Columbia University, allowing its students to take Columbia's courses.<sup>10</sup> The comprehensive religious education of JTS was very attractive for potential rabbis (even if the numbers were rather small, 77 in 1917, for example) and so Orthodox Jews also were forced to rethink their education.<sup>11</sup>

Father Ryan mentioned Yeshiva University, a modern Orthodox University. In 1897, New York State chartered Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, still a rather traditional *yeshiva*, which refashioned itself into a modern rabbinic school in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, reimagining itself in response to the competition coming from JTS. Under the leadership of Bernard Revel, it became Rabbinical Seminary of America, described as "alternately... the ancient Yeshiva and the modern College, the Orient and the Occident, the old world and the new."<sup>12</sup> And in 1928, it became a Yeshiva College, providing a secular and traditional Jewish education to Orthodox male students.

But Jewish education in the United States also distinguished itself in creating non-religious institutions of Jewish higher learning, and a Jewish post-graduate institution. Gratz College in the suburbs of Philadelphia was founded as a liberal arts college steeped in Jewish values, and in its original goal was to serve as a teachers college. According a proposal for its founding, Gratz College was to "be devoted to the dissemination of the knowledge of Jewish

history, the Hebrew language, Jewish literature and the Jewish religion. The curriculum of the College shall be especially designed for teachers, and upon the successful completion of the course a certificate shall be awarded.”<sup>13</sup> And in 1907, Dropsie College, now the Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies in Philadelphia, was founded with the primary goal of post-graduate education “for the promotion of and instruction in the Hebrew and cognate languages and their respective literatures and in the Rabbinical learning and literature,” with “other languages and branches of learning” added if resources allowed, and did not “impair the efficiency of the instruction in the Semitic languages and Rabbinical learning.”<sup>14</sup>

While the majority of Jewish institutions of higher education were focused on religious, rabbinical training, perhaps with the exception of Gratz College, there were no secular Jewish institutions of learning until 1925, when the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research was founded in Vilna, and the Hebrew University was founded in Jerusalem.

Both YIVO and the Hebrew University in Jerusalem were products of Jewish nationalist movements: Diaspora nationalism, and Zionism. YIVO was solely an institute for Jewish research. Its scholarship was to be in Yiddish, and cover social sciences: philology, history, economy and statistics, which focused on demography, and pedagogy.

While YIVO focused on research, and granted no degrees, the Hebrew University in Jerusalem was conceived as the first true Jewish university, in which Jewish education was only a part of the mission, and which would also support research in sciences and other areas of knowledge.<sup>15</sup>

The first ideas were voiced already in the 1880s by Zvi Hermann Shapira, a mathematician and a Zionist, and the 1902 pamphlet written by Chaim Weizmann, the future president of the State of Israel, Martin Buber, a well-known thinker and philosopher, and Berthold Feivel, a prominent publisher, laid out detailed framework for such a university. In 1913, the 11th World Zionist Congress voted to establish a university in Jerusalem, whose language of instruction would be Hebrew. The corner stone was laid in 1918, and the University opened doors in 1925. In the United States, Brandeis University, founded in 1948, became the first non-sectarian, egalitarian Jewish university whose students were not asked about race, religion, and origin. Its educational focus was on the broad spectrum of knowledge with four schools: the School of General Studies, the School of Social Studies, the School of Humanities, and the School of Science.

One of the reasons for creation of Jewish institutions of higher education was the fact that Jewish studies were generally not included in the curricula of non-Jewish universities, and when they were—especially in Europe they were placed within theology faculties and studied from Christian perspective. In the United States, Jewish Studies entered the non-sectarian academe with the Miller Chair in Jewish History at Columbia's History Department in 1928. By 1969, Jewish studies scholars were offering courses in Jewish studies at over 200 universities. Fordham University joined the now much longer list by instituting a minor in Jewish Studies minor. Now, at modern universities, including Fordham, Jewish and non-Jewish students have access to Jewish studies, alongside all other subjects.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Councils/ecum17.htm>, Accessed, November 11, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Fritz Richard Stern, *Varieties of History: From Voltaire to the Present* (Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1964), 55-56, and also a different version in translation of Wilma Iggers, in Georg Iggers, ed. (Indianapolis, Bobbs Merrill, 1973), 135-38.

<sup>4</sup> The debate's most famous example is Naftali Herz Wessely's *Divrei shalom ve-emet* [words of peace and truth] published in 1782, and the reactions to it. Wessely called the two kinds of knowledge *Torat ha-elokhim*, and *Torat ha-adam*.

<sup>5</sup> Kaufmann Kohler "A Training School for Rabbis for American Judaism" in *The Reform Advocate* (February 17, 1917): 59.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Joseph Abrahams, "Jewish Theological Seminary," *The Reform Advocate* (May 26, 191): 507.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 508, 513.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 508.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 513.

<sup>12</sup> Solomon T. H. Hurvitz, "Rabbinical College of America," *ibid*, 516.

<sup>13</sup> Julius H. Greenstone, "Gratz College," *ibid.*, 529.

<sup>14</sup> Joseph Reider, "The Dropsie College for Hebrew and Cognate Learning," *ibid.*, 524.

<sup>15</sup> A concise overview of YIVO's history, Cecile Kuznitz, "YIVO" in the *YIVO Encyclopedia*, <http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/YIVO> . See also, Cecile E. Kuznitz, *Yivo and the Making of Modern Jewish Culture: Scholarship for the Yiddish Nation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

Muslim Response to the Fall 2016 McGinley Lecture  
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I thank Father Patrick Ryan for his very illuminating and informative lecture. He eloquently and succinctly reviewed the formation and development of Islamic religious education, its key institutions, and elites. In my response, I would like to focus primarily on the chief Muslim institution for advanced learning, the *madrasa*, which Father Ryan touched on briefly; and expand on the unique historical role of this institution in the production, preservation and transmission of Islamic knowledge. I will also discuss how the establishment of western domination over the Muslim world in the nineteenth century transformed the traditional scholarly structures in Muslim societies and shaped modern Muslim perceptions of Islam and approaches to Islamic learning.

Derived from an Arabic root meaning “to learn,” the term *madrasa* corresponded in classical Islamic usage to institutions dedicated to instruction in Islamic religious sciences, most particularly, *fiqh* or Islamic jurisprudence. As Father Ryan pointed out, the emergence of a self-conscious class of scholars, known collectively as *ulama*, specializing in preserving and interpreting the two chief scriptural sources of Islam, namely the Quran and the Hadith, played a pivotal role in the establishment of *madrasas*. In addition, as Father Ryan mentioned, the consolidation of Islamic jurisprudence as the ultimate Islamic religious science stimulated the organization of formal settings for learning as well.

The *madrasa* first appeared in the region of Khorasan in eastern Iran in the late 10th century. It spread quickly to other parts of the Islamic world, including Iraq, Syria, Egypt, and North Africa, and became the most common and distinctive Islamic institution in medieval Muslim cities. Usually built close to a large mosque, the *madrasa* was a building that provided space for lessons and accommodations for students. The *madrasa* was essentially a private institution, the activities of which were sponsored by an endowment established by a wealthy individual. Salaries for professors and other servants of the institution and stipends for students were funded by the income generated by the endowment. Although any person who was in possession of great wealth could construct a *madrasa*, it was mostly rulers and other members of the ruling elite who founded *madrastas* and donated rich endowments for their maintenance.

The language of instruction was Arabic and the main subjects taught were Islamic jurisprudence, Quranic exegesis, theology, Prophetic tradition (*hadith*), Arabic syntax and logic. The most distinctive feature of *madrasa* education was its informal and personal character. In addition, the knowledge was primarily taught and transmitted through the study of texts based on oral instruction. A professor would dictate a certain text to the student, who would master it through memorization. The student would not only learn the text but also study the explanation or commentary attached to it. *Madrastas* did not grant degrees to graduates. Instead, if the student mastered a text satisfactorily, the teacher would grant him an *ijaza*, or a license which testified to the student's qualification to teach that text. The *ijaza* would also list all the names of those who had transmitted the text starting with the name of its original composer.

By 1500 a set of great classical texts had been established in most of the fields of the *madrassa* curriculum. The rise of authoritative classical texts had a crucial impact on the production of knowledge in medieval Islam. *Ulama* in later medieval history usually wrote commentaries on these classical works, and as a result the number of original compositions declined. Not surprisingly, this gave the classical Islamic education a conservative character.

Besides expanding the reach and scope of Islamic learning, the proliferation of *madrassas* had significant social and cultural consequences as well. To begin with, the availability of financial support for students made advanced religious learning possible for larger segments of Muslim society. Likewise, the creation of sources of income for *ulama* outside state power not only allowed the formation of a learned class solely committed to the preservation and transmission of knowledge but also consolidated the social power of *ulama* as a distinct social class. In addition, the standardization of the *madrassa* curriculum and the emergence of a set of authoritative texts that were shared across the entire Islamic world provided intellectual cohesiveness and unity for medieval Islam. And this development played a key role in the creation of a unique Islamic culture and identity. The unifying culture of learning and the establishment of a global Muslim identity ensured the survival of Islam when the pagan Mongol armies, utterly hostile to Islam, invaded the Muslim lands in the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century and caused unprecedented destruction, including putting an end to the most important political institution of Sunni Islam, the Abbasid caliphate in Baghdad (1258). Under these dire circumstances, more than anything else it was the *ulama*, the institution of the *madrassa*, and the texts inscribed

in the collective memory of scholars which kept the Islamic culture and religion alive and saved it from extinction.

The expansion of Western domination over the Muslim world in the 19<sup>th</sup> century world had a dramatic impact on Islamic society. Traditional Muslim learning was no exception. The most important effect of the establishment of western sway was the introduction and the growing dominance of secular Western knowledge. In most places in the Muslim world, this process was associated closely with the establishment of colonial rule. In their attempt to build modern state structures in their colonies, western powers introduced western systems of education and western law codes, consequently diminishing the power of the *sharia* and the traditional Muslim learned elites. The situation was not any different in the Muslim states which succeeded in retaining their independence throughout the nineteenth century, namely the Ottoman Empire and Iran. To be able to resist the danger of political subjugation, rulers of both states undertook westernizing reforms, especially in education. This trend continued unabated in the second half of the twentieth century when the Middle Eastern states won their independence following the Second World War.

The secularization of education, the marginalization of ulama, and the rise of new westernized intellectual elites led Muslims to review the traditional body of Islamic knowledge and seek ways to adapt it to their new context. The Muslim response can be organized into three groups: reformism, modernism, and Islamism. With origins going back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the reformist movement did not question the validity and eternity of Islamic knowledge. The reformists' aim was rather to revive Islam by cleansing it of the popular beliefs and practices which they believed was not included in

the original message of Muhammad. The reformists were especially critical of Islamic mysticism and the various devotional practices associated with it, such as worshipping local saints, visiting their tombs, and seeking spiritual communion with God. They accounted for the decline in Islamic learning and religion with the internal corruption of Islamic faith and morality and wanted to revive Islam by sanitizing the inheritance of Islamic knowledge by a renewed emphasis on the primacy of the Quran and the life of His messenger as the only authentic sources of religious practice. For instance, the Deoband movement in India, which Father Ryan mentioned, was inspired by the Islamic reformist movement. Similarly, the Nur movement in Turkey, founded by the Naqshbandi shaykh Said Bediuzzaman Nursi (1873-1960), and its presently most successful offshoot led by Fethullah Gulen, also known as the Hizmet movement (which emphasizes altruism, hard work and education) can also be considered as examples of modern movements influenced by Islamic reformism.

In contrast to reformism, the modernist movement was concerned primarily with the intellectual decline in Islam and the reality of the superiority of western knowledge which they viewed as the true source of western strength. The modernist Islamic thinkers wanted to review Islamic knowledge and bring it up to par with western learning. The most prominent figures amongst the modernists were Sayyid Ahmad Khan of India, Namik Kemal of the Ottoman Empire, and the philosopher and political activist Jamal al-din Afghani, mentioned by Father Ryan. Eventually, however, the modernists came to be overtaken by the secularists who discarded the medieval heritage of Islamic knowledge completely in education and made western science, languages, and learning the only subjects of instruction in the modern secular schools they established. Here, the leading

figures were mostly 20<sup>th</sup> century secular rulers of the Muslim world, such as the founder of modern Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, and Reza Shah Pahlavi of Iran.

In the twentieth century, Islamism became the most popular political and intellectual movement in Islam. For the Islamists, all knowledge must be subordinated to the divine revelation sent by God. As such, the Islamists view the Islamic law, *sharia*, as the only organizing principle for life and believe that it is to remain so till the End of Times.

Consequently, they oppose the separation of religion and politics and support the idea that Islam should become the guiding principle for every aspect of life, including mundane affairs. Therefore they call for a complete Islamization of state institutions and the establishment of an Islamic order based on sharia. As far as education is concerned, they focus heavily on moral and religious education and criticize the reformists for their lack of concern for western knowledge and the modernists for their complete capitulation to it. Instead, they strive for a religious and political regeneration of the Muslim society and advocate Islamization of the western scholarly disciplines. Fields such as Islamic economics, Islamic politics, or Islamic sociology are Islamist inventions. Notable leaders of Islamism include names such as Sayyid Abul Ala Mawdudi of Pakistan, Hasan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb of Egypt. The Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt, along with its several offshoots such as Hamas in Palestine, is currently the most influential Islamist organization in the Sunni Arab world.

Although at first glance it may appear that Islamism emerged and developed as a reaction to modernization in Muslim societies, the success of Islamism should be understood within the context of modernization itself and analyzed in conjunction with the democratization of knowledge in the Islamic world. The adoption and widespread

use of print technology played a key role in this process. In particular, reformist-minded *ulama*, from the 19<sup>th</sup> century on, everywhere in the Muslim world quickly seized the opportunity provided by the new technology and put it effectively to use to disseminate Islamic knowledge, confined previously to the engagement of a small group of people in Muslim society, to the larger public so that Muslims could improve their understanding of Islamic learning and defend it against the growing encroachments of intrusive western education. Later on, the introduction of other forms of mass communication—radio, television, film, tape recording, and ultimately the internet, further intensified this process and helped the spread of Islamic knowledge to the margins of Muslim communities.

Another important step in the democratization of Islamic knowledge was the translation for the first time of the Quran, the *hadiths*, and other principal Islamic texts from Arabic into national languages. As a result, Muslims gained first hand access to the Scriptures of Islam and the works of the greatest religious authorities. In other words, they could now read the key texts of Islam on their own outside the *madrassa* institution and develop their own interpretations independently from the traditional authoritative interpretations of the *ulama*. Consequently, new interpretative frameworks, shaped by reformist, modernist and Islamist points of view, emerged to engage with the great texts of Islamic knowledge, a development which had a dramatic impact on Muslim societies and stimulated the formation of new approaches to Islam. While this process intellectually empowered individual Muslims by liberating them from the authority of the cumulative Muslim past, it weakened the role of the *ulama* as the authoritative transmitters and interpreters of Islamic knowledge and tradition. As *ulama* lost their monopolistic status over Islamic learning, a new class of lay educated Muslim thinkers

arose in the twentieth century whose teachings and leadership became the prime sources of Islamic guidance and political activism conducted in the name of Islam. For example, Hasan al-Banna (1906-1949), founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, was a teacher who had studied at the teachers' college in Cairo; so was Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966) of Egypt, the most influential Islamist thinker of the twentieth century whose ideas proved crucial for the formation of Jihadist movements, including the notorious Al-Qaeda. Its founder Usama bin Laden, who would often issue *fatwas* in the image of traditional *ulama*, in fact did not have any traditional Islamic education. He was a businessman trained only in western-style schools. His successor Ayman al-Zawahiri is also a product of modern, western education. Before joining Jihadist groups, Zawahiri was a promising medical doctor.

As the Islamic world struggles today with growing jihadist violence, the most important question preoccupying Muslims and non-Muslims alike is whether the ideas and activities of jihadists can be substantiated by Islamic principles. Or, to what extent do the jihadists represent Islam and in what ways do they draw on the Islamic tradition? Based on this brief discussion, we can firmly state that Jihadism is nothing but a ferocious rebellion against the inherited Islamic knowledge and tradition and no doubt it aims to destroy it in such a way that neither the Mongols nor the enlightened western and westernized elites could ever do.