

[PROVISIONAL TRANSLATION FROM PERSIAN]

[Translator's notes appear in square brackets.]

[Personal information has been **redacted**.]

[The excerpt below is from the section of the article that pertains to the Baha'i Faith]

[Adapted from website:] Student News Agency

[Date:] 18 Shahrivar 1394 [9 September 2015]

Escape to the Front of University of Mazandaran in Recognition of Baha'ism

The university group, Student News Agency, published in the news media last night [an article] with the title "Recognition of the Perverse Baha'i Sect in Mazandaran University".

The story was that the new incoming students of the master's degree programme of the University of Mazandaran, when registering online, were faced for the first time, with the option of [choosing] the Baha'i sect in addition to Shia and Sunni in the field for specifying religion; all this while, under the law of the Islamic Republic, propagating Baha'ism as a perverse sect is a crime and the Baha'i sect's followers are not allowed to study at university.

Of course, today, after the publication of this illegal action by the University of Mazandaran, the university issued a response. In response, the University of Mazandaran stated that the issue of the activation of the Baha'ism option among the Shia and Sunni religions was in line with the university's routine of the past two years and was not a new practice.

The university ran forward and blamed others, saying, "This action was taken during the previous management of the university in previous years. Its former managers entered this section in the form, and it is not a new event that has [become] sensitive at this time." Immediately after this denial, Abbasnejad, the former vice chancellor of the university, in an interview with a reporter of the Student News Agency in Sari, rejected this claim and said, "Any change in this field, especially in the field of postgraduate education, needs to be approved, and if they have a reason for this claim, they should state it." He averred, "Blaming mistakes on this person and that person is not morally and religiously correct."

Jafari, the former director of education at University of Mazandaran, also told our reporter in this regard, "In our time, all registration work was done manually. Only during one period, the online registration was done using the Sama system, and that was sent to us directly from Tehran."

Referring to the expulsion of several Baha'i students during his tenure and that of the university's vice chancellor, Jafari said, "How can we make this blunder and not correct it, but expel a Baha'i student who has completed 110 credits?"

He said, "These denials do not erase the mistakes of the current officials, and it is better for the officials to apologize for these mistakes, which we hope were not intentional."