

### ***Training statute, quiddity and necessities***

***Rah – e – Tarbiyat:*** Thank you very much for the time you devoted to our Quarterly Journal Rah – e – Tarbiyat. Our first question is can you kindly explain how you would define systematic education.

***Mr. A'raafi***<sup>1</sup>: I greatly appreciate you and your colleagues for your efforts in presenting educational topics to the people. In the beginning, I should mention that prior to accepting the management position of this center, I had the honor of visiting our Supreme Leader and presented to him my ideas and goals.

The summary of the discussion we had has been compiled as the charter of policies and is actually the principles that have been guiding us for the past years. In that meeting we discussed approximately fifty topics regarding the policies and we identified relevant activities for the center on the basis of these policies. We examined eight statutes. These statutes are the constituents of the general statute of the university. For instance one of them was a comprehensive educational statute. A lot was accomplished in this regard, and I can proudly say that a number of new initiatives in the field were discussed. Seventy majors were authored in this program.

In the preparation phase of the statutes, we preceded to complete approximately seventy to eighty percent with the hopes of publishing this collection upon completion. To be more

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precise, these statutes centered around the fields of education and practicality. We had similar suggestions within the field of research, and also in the field of propagation, graduation, and so on. Another policy of the university, with regard to the process of planning and preparing statutes, on which I laid real emphasis, revolves around the training statute. There exist other statutes as well for example, the cultural statute, Quranic statute, and others in related departments. Guiding the activities of the university towards the planning, preparing, and confirming of statutory infrastructures in various fields, has been the overall policy in recent years. As a matter of fact, one of the constituents of this overall policy was the training statute which we are about to discuss today. I should applaud the efforts of all those individuals who made sincere efforts and contributions and took the first step in authoring this statute. With regards to the training statute, there are two definitions that need to be clarified before continuing. I do not wish to prolong this discussion, however very briefly I would like to point out that the meaning of the word training here reflects the same general meaning that is more commonly used. To clarify, training in its general meaning refers to the act of preparing the physical body in order to be utilized for changes that may occur within ones personality be it within the mental, behavioral, spiritual or psychological states.

That is what is known as training. In our definition, training has a criterion that makes it unique. In our view, the act of training includes those activities and processes that bring about change in every aspect except education. In fact, training is the opposite of learning. Although a number of general policies of education are seen within the nature of this type of training, there is no relation between training and learning. Considering the training statute as

a general term, this statute can include the educational statute as well. The separation between education and training is acceptable provided it is not an absolute separation.

We have included general policies of scientific and conceptual training within the training statute, so that these policies can influence the educational field. Due to this we can say that this training statute has presented the overall policy that exists in the field of education. However, this general policy does not include practical principles, methods, procedures, and systems in detail. In fact this is something different and proceeds step by step by itself. We do not claim perfection, but we do believe that training needs to be present in every step of this procedure. The next step in this project is to critique this educational system from a training viewpoint which needs to be accomplished in conformity with the training statute. I am sure there is no ambiguity within the definition of the “system”. By “system” we mean factors which are not only in a form of a collection but also related to one another and at the same time are organic. Moreover, they enjoy an internal integrity and aim at a specific target. Obviously this is the general definition for any system, but the word system is used in three meanings.

Sometimes it means the system of the mind and thought. Sometimes it refers to an executive and practical system, and occasionally we use this term to refer to the combination of both of these systems. According to the above definitions, we can interpret the training statute in several ways. Firstly, by training statute we mean general policies and major ideas that can clarify training at a theoretically level. Secondly, we can define the training statute to refer to an executive structure that includes a training department,

which is responsible for the fulfillment of this concept of training. Sometimes by statute we refer to both of these definitions. We refer to this concept where the statute acts as a body of modern ideas which is disciplined and related to the field of training and at the same time we also refer to the executive elements that are taken into consideration to fulfill these ideas.

What we are after is the latter meaning, namely a statute in its comprehensive meaning. In our point of view, the training statute is a collection that not only covers the elements of theory, idea, mind, and education but also includes executive structures, rules and regulations. Obviously, we should aim at achieving a comprehensive statute. The current training statute implies the first meaning and has nothing to do with executive structures. It mostly deals with both the theoretical and mental fields. This statute, with the addition of the structure of executive and educative appendixes will turn into a comprehensive statute. It is healthy to discuss the training system with regard to the first definition. This system can be considered as training ideas and thoughts aimed at a specific target.

**Rah – e – Tarbiyat:** According to what you said, what are the features of an ideal statute?

**Mr. A'raafi:** An ideal statute should include some of the following features: firstly, these ideas and plans are a collection. Second, the constituents of this collection are related and have internal integrity. Third, it is aimed at a specific target, situation and ideal. Fourth, it is equal and well-balanced, and fifth, it is adaptable. These are actually the aims of any statute in the practical sense and act as principle items that should not be ignored.

**Rah – e – Tarbiyat:** In your opinion, what factors and elements explicate the necessity of a training statute?

**MR. A'raafi:** Let me clarify some points. The first point is that we put forth our efforts within educational and cultural activities, with the hope of achieving a definite outcome. What is that outcome? In other words what is our ideal purpose? This statute should actually be the planning to achieve our flawless goal and I request everybody to pursue this goal. This ideal goal should be made clear in every educational and training institution so that other programs can be centralized around it. Thus the very first question is that what outcome are we trying to achieve?

The answer to this question forces us to seek a comprehensive meaning of a training statute that covers all fields such as: education, research, reception, service, and welfare. The other point is there should be the presence of a training spirit and nature that is felt within all cultural and educational activities that we do. As well, we should rely on the assistance of a preacher as we do in other areas of our life namely our livelihood, services, and facilities.

This statute on one hand should provide internal integrity for all cultural and scientific activities while on the other hand should prevent lopsided and unbalanced growth and the graduation of our seminary students. Therefore the statute should guarantee that students are trained with the use of a balanced and equilibrant program, so that there is coordination between the fields of study and that ultimate goal. Thus, integrity and balance are of supreme significance in this regard. Our movement is according to a paradigm, whether we accept that or not. This statute intends to clarify and include all that has been discussed and also determine

a system that is flexible, adjustable, and built on the base of internal integrity. It is also meant to define the foundation of our executive system. When we want to author a statute and determine the professors, generally, each and every executive step should be based on the statute.

**Rah – e – Tarbiyat:** The issue of morality and training in traditional religious systems has been based on models, while within the new and modern systems, the concept of structures are more emphasized. Which approach do you adopt to train the seminary students in the Al-Mustafa International University?

**Mr. A'raafi:** Our approach is based on both of these concepts. As you pointed out in your question, sometimes the formation of a personality and the fulfillment of a training process is founded and planned on a model or professor, and sometimes a training course is designed according to a structured system. In this case a structure is designed to guide people towards a specific set of ideas and purposes. By structure we are referring to the same previously mentioned structures of livelihood and education, in which a particular orientation and message is taken into account.

The first system has been more glorified within the history of our Shi'a seminary schools. Although it cannot be said that a single person is a perfect criteria, rather that person has been identified by a tradition and a structure and has lived in an environment which as the supreme leader states, has some unwritten traditions. So we can conclude that these structures are already in place.

Thus answering your question about adopting a model, a professor, or a person or working on the basis of structures, I can say these co-exist, but the difference is that sometimes the first

one is more emphasized and sometimes both of them. Something I regard to be desirable is that a statute should be based pulling these two ideas together while moving towards the target. It is not logical to ignore the guidance of a teacher – who is a centered-based model –and the beneficial interaction that a professor needs to have with his student to promote their personality. We can see that the concept of a role model and professor has been emphasized right here and it should not be neglected within the complementary steps and of course should be taken into consideration simultaneously. With the passage of time along with the advancements and expansions in structure, we should ensure that the fundamental structures of education and research are not impartial and void of the message.

On the contrary they should possess a cultural nature and spirit. If we intend to obtain a proper output based on that mental statute, we ought to believe that these subclasses and subsystems in this center carry a message and a cultural – educational view which needs to be carefully delivered. These are the same hidden programs and unwritten traditions which are present in an educational statute, and I regret to say that we have not worked on theses sufficiently enough. For example, before the Islamic Revolution, when a seminary student went to school to study, there were so many things he was not told or taught; rather he was indirectly guided towards, because of the current condition and communicative system that was in place at the time. We should take both sides into consideration.

***Rah – e – Tarbiyat:*** In the past, training was considered to be a process rather than a project. Does the training statute intend to merge these two?

**Mr. A'raafi:** Generally, I agree with the distinction that in the past it was a process and now it has changed to be a project. Within the last era, the issue of training in the educational and training statutes has been in the form of a project too. Take "Jame – o – Sa'adah", "Me'raj – o – Sa'adah", and "Adaab – ol – Mota'allemin" as examples - these books attempt to plan and introduce a proper model relevant to their time. We have rich traditions which have been utilized for the training statute. If you think about "Tarbiyat – ol – Manazel" written by such people as Abu Ali Sina, you can sense the existence of planning.

I mean you can feel that a problem or a project has been mentioned, and accordingly, a program was presented. It is the same way today. As a result, project making has been the center of attention since that time. We cannot say that it was something irrelevant that did not receive enough attention. One feature of our era is that it relates everything to one another and makes them systematic. It stresses the structure of the statutes and we are bound to make our efforts in this regard. We will consider past factors and present needs when making the best of our current situation.

**Rah – e – Tarbiyat:** Is the training statute flexible enough to cover the diversity that exists within the students, or has a one – dimensional image of man been used as its target? In other words, have you set your goals to maximize the prosperity of human talents in this statute or is your focus to achieve balanced prosperity amongst the students?

**Mr. A'raafi:** In answering the question with regards to the practicality of the issue, I will say that there will definitely be some flexibility during the phase of execution. We have a balanced image

of an ideal student possessing various dimensions. An average level of moral, social, family, mental, spiritual, and emotional progress has been planned in this statute, which ought to be materialized in every student and within the centre itself. However the needed flexibility should be included in the phase of execution.

For instance, if you plan to train someone to accept a management position in a company, his training should focus on management aspects and any related subjects that may exist. This should take place during the execution of the statute. The statute is planned with an ideal and well – balanced man in mind, and there exists the possibility that to also include exceptions that may occur from time to time in any given student. For example, you would expect, to some extent, a new student of the seminary, who has come to Qum, to be familiar with inflexion and syntax along with articles of faith and tenets of religious doctrine. He requires some of the basics to enable him to answer some problems or search through a reference to find an answer. He also needs some training in the art of removing the religious dubiousness of others or to even deliver a speech or author a book.

This is the minimum prerequisite for every body to possess. But where do specialties come into place here? Specialties are necessary when the need for philosophy, theology, mysticism, or jurisprudence is felt. There is a common base in which equilibrium, balance, flexibility, and comparability have been taken into account, and this statute has been planned around this base. In the statute we have determined the minimum level for seminary students, but this is not at a price of other issues which have been discussed. We believe that the specialty courses should reflect the student's need, interest, and capacity. If a person becomes a

specialist in a field, this specialty is expected to be based on this base as well it is expected to prevent him to have unbalanced and one – dimensional growth. In this program, he will specialize in one specific course, but since it is according to a common base, he will have well – balanced progress within that field. This burden of accomplishment will be on the shoulders of the schools. Authorities should work hard in these specialized fields.

They need to be anthropologists, they ought to know their audience, and they are bound to know the needs of the communities to accomplish their goals.

**Rah – e – Tarbiyat:** Generally, what basic challenges do you face in the case of systematic training, theoretically?

**Mr. A'raafi:** The intention to compile the statute is similar to a discussion that exists in philosophy. In philosophy it is said that when a person intends to negate philosophy he first should philosophize with himself. I believe if somebody says do not do that, this is not right. If he wants to do something practically, he will consult a chart and work based on that. In my opinion, nobody can step out of a chart or paradigm.

Someone may think that this plan has an alternative. Although the creation of a plan itself does not have an alternative, the plan does. Perhaps someone says; leave the person alone to grow naturally, just like a free economy. Some people because of some considerations say; leave the economy alone to stabilize itself, and in our field it is possible to hear someone say leave the seminary issues alone and let these unwritten traditions perform their roles. In this process, this idea can be taken into account as an alternative for our statute; we do not accept this idea. Even

the economy makes some arrangements to stabilize itself. I am of the opinion that politicians, high ranking officials of a specific sector, and managers in different levels and also pundits require a planned theoretical framework, one which is both agreeable and acceptable by them all.

No good result is obtained without it. As a matter of fact, elements of freedom in the progress of a seminary student should not be neglected in the statute, especially in complementary courses.

Necessary preparation should be made for the students to succeed and reach their ideals and goals which are planned in the statute. They should have sensible growth. They should be given a role, and be given esteemed importance. We should try to create as much distance as possible from having an imposed and compulsory plan.

**Rah – e– Tarbiyat:** What obstacles block the way when attempting to materialize the statute and how are they removed?

**Mr. A’raafi:** Related institutes of every kind pursue the exact same steps to achieve a comprehensive statute that covers theoretical foundations and ideas. To predict executive processes, moreover it should be inclusive enough to cast its effective umbrella on official services, training, research, and educational systems and even influence architectural structures of the center. There are some ultimate and desirable points for training which require years of effort and time. In my opinion, something which has been accomplished so far is fundamentally significant and represents only ten to twenty percent of the entire plan. This is the outcome of long term research and consultation. This is only one phase however.

In the next phase we need an executive statute to determine the executive factors and elements. We also need to determine a major rulebook. The other phase that we can possibly place before the above mentioned phase is to define the details of the accomplishments achieved in various fields such as society and politics. This is where we feel the need for executive rules and regulations, and also the need for elements which are going to materialize and perform those rules. We will be required to perform some research about required sciences and data and plan to upgrade this science. We will then seek a research, cultural, and educational system and see how they can be coordinated with these goals.

We need to evaluate the system of service and livelihood and its compatibility with this program and compare the system of family life with this view. This is what we intend to achieve on a long term basis. It requires a lot of effort but I believe it is of great value for the center to step in to such fields. It can probably be arranged in a ten to twenty – year – long process. Naturally, necessary arrangements should be determined and performed during the process. The progress of this plan can be hindered by a number of elements. One of them is that a group of people who lack the systematic view and comprehensive attitude dominates the center. The other one can be the existence of a long process and the complexity of the plan which can relate in a disappointment and discouragement.

**Rah – e – Tarbiyat:** A serious obstacle and loss for the process of training emerges when it changes into a conscious process. Is this process usually hidden and unaware?

**Mr. A'raafi:** There are some other cases besides education,

which will end in better results if they are presented to the students implicitly - but it is not to be generalized. Two things that we are passionate about are both the policy makers and educators. In my opinion, the more conscious you are the better. It is, however not needed to be the same for learners. These are details that should be discussed at the executive phase.

**Rah – e – Tarbiyat:** If consciousness is emphasized within training methods, this issue will obtain a superficial manifestation. Do you have any worries in this regard?

**Mr. A'raafi:** There are definitely some worries with regards to accomplishing the plan simply because the sheer nature of this project is threatened by the possibility of turning into a superficial concept. We had the same worry during the process of planning the training program. But I believe this should not deter us. One advantage mankind has over the other creations, is that he is able to take conscious measures and give thought to his future. This has to be done.

We can be careful about the details to avoid the losses and disadvantages. I have mentioned some points in the conclusion of the training statute to prevent a superficial and simple view. Furthermore, there is a point I want to make regarding services and facilities and that is that they should not be overemphasized or underemphasized. Executive agents should be really skillful and experienced. With these preparations we will be able to repair the damage. The problem is that when the program is performed unconsciously, everything that we plan to do indirectly, will happen directly. This results in the students understanding that these programs have been arranged for them and that can be dangerous .

We can minimize this danger by using various tactics. To sum up, this process is so important that it can not be left alone. Executive strictness should decrease, but it should not spread to the field of services. If the program is planned in a way that, the seminary student is bossed around to do this or do that, as soon as he gets up in the morning, he will never feel like he is free to do what he wants.

There has really been a paradox in the history of the training system of thought. If we set a rule for freedom and discipline and make tight frameworks for them and make all of the services revolve around that, discipline will be inflexible and the student will adopt a kind of mechanical behavior, and this is a tremendous error. In the phase of execution different strategies can be applied to bestow a feeling of freedom to the student and avoid the above - mentioned traps. This is the purpose we are pursuing. These blights should truly be taken into account within the complementary phase of planning. One of the results of conducting training councils with the presence of all officials was that we invited all of the minor officials from three or four major councils.

This was something new in the past three or four years, that was the outcome of a general cooperation of every body in these four or five major fields. Scientific groups are also important especially in the new rule book. We have new training – scientific groups which should carry this burden. A lot should be done in this regard; we have not done anything yet.

**Rah – e – Tarbiyat:** Thank you very much.