

System of transliteration of the Arabic and Persian words using Cyrillic characters

Decisions of Transliteration Conference of November 20th, 2004

It is decided to accept the system developed by Krachkovsky, with some minor changes. This is a truly scientific system. It was de-facto standard among scholars in Soviet Union since its 1923, and it is still widely used in the ex-USSR countries.

Names of the Arabic letters are given approximately, as they sound. Names of additional letters present in Persian alphabet are given in quote marks and **purple colour**. Cyrillic transliteration is marked **red**. Roman transliteration used in Bahá'í literature is marked **blue**.

Consonants

ء hamzah ' ' ر ra p r ف fa ф f	ب ba б b ز za з z ق k'af қ q	پ "pa" п p ژ zha ж zh ک kaf к k	ت ta т t س sin с s گ gaf г g
ث tha җ th ش shin ш sh ل lam л l	ج jim дж j ص sad җ җ mim м m	چ chim ч ch ض dad ڌ (ڌ) ڌ ن nun н n	ح ha ҳ ҳ ط ta ҧ ҧ ه gha х h
خ kha х kh ظ za ڐ (ڐ) ڐ و waw в v	د dal д d ع ayn ' ' ی ya й y	ذ zal ڏ ڏ غ ghayn ғ gh	

Vowels

َ a a	آ alif ā á	َوَ ay aw
ِ и i	ای ī í	ِی ай
ُ y u	او ŷ ú	

Unicode

This system is fully compatible with Unicode: the diacritics which are used there are easily introduced through the so-called *non-spacing* (or *combining*) characters:

name: COMBINING MACRON
old name: NON-SPACING MACRON
category: Mn (Mark, Non-Spacing)
combining: 230

name: COMBINING DOT BELOW
old name: NON-SPACING DOT BELOW
Adobe glyph name: dotbelowcomb
category: Mn (Mark, Non-Spacing)
combining: 220
found in charsets: CP1258 (F2);

name: COMBINING BREVE BELOW
old name: NON-SPACING BREVE BELOW
category: Mn (Mark, Non-Spacing)
combining: 220

name: COMBINING LOW LINE
old name: NON-SPACING UNDERSCORE
category: Mn (Mark, Non-Spacing)
combining: 220

Instead of the COMBINING LOW LINE the simple underlining may be used, which is easily added with standard tools in most of the text processors.

Fonts

Fonts for this system are already developed, are used widely among the Orientalists, and can be easily obtained. However, they are absent in the standard package of Microsoft Windows.

Exceptions

Not all words should be transliterated. Among the exceptions are the names of the Central Figures: **Бахаулла, Баб, Абдул-Баха, Шоги Эффенди**, and words and phrases which are used in devotions, or otherwise singled out: **Алла-у-Абха, Йа Баха-ул-Абха, Хукукулла**. Also, such exceptions include the name of the Faith: **Вера Бахаи**, and its followers: **бахай**. It is suggested not to transliterate the name of the Bábí Faith: **Вера Баби** (to use this spelling in the Sacred Writings. It is possible to use **бабизм** where it is justified,

as, for example, in general-purpose literature); the followers of this Faith will be in Russian **бабиды**, and adjective to it: **бабидский**. The explanation given for this should be that "such is the historically accepted spelling in Russian-speaking Bahá'í communities."

It is decided not to transliterate the toponyms, i.e. geographical names. Instead, it is felt appropriate to spell toponyms as they are given on maps published by the Russian Federal Department of Geodesy and Cartography. The toponyms which constitute part of a personal name, should be transliterated, with the exception of a certain *three-character city*, whose name sounds offensive in Russian.

The detailed list of exceptions will be compiled later by the working group composed of Yuliy Ioannesyan and Konrad Popp, who may invite others to help them, if they wish so.

Some Particularities of, and Changes to, the Krachkovsky's system

The combination –ih at the end of the words should be transliterated as -a

If the word is to be interpreted according to the *abjad* system, the full transliteration of the word should be given in the notes, with «x» at the end of it.

The Arabic Definite Article

In Roman systems of transliteration, even the scholarly ones, the definite article is treated differently; sometimes it is joined to the word, as in the system used by Shoghi Effendi. According to the Krachkovsky's system, however, it is always separated, sometimes like **ал-** (when the first letter of the word is "lunar"), sometimes like **а** with the *replicated* first letter of the word (when it is a "solar" letter). Thus, for example, 'Abdu'l-Bahá according to the Krachkovsky's system will be transliterated as 'Абд ал-Баха'; since the first letter of Bahá is the lunar one, it is assimilated with the letter l of the definite article al-. However, the same article with the word Shams (the Sun) will be written differently: as 'Abdu'l-shams according to the Oxford system, as 'Abdu'sh-Shams in the Shoghi Effendi's system, and as 'Абд аш-шамс in Krachkovsky's system, because «ш» is the solar letter, and becomes assimilated with the article's consonant.

To conclude, if a word preceding the Arabic definite article does not begin with a vowel, the article is separated from a preceding word by a space, and from the following word, by a dash: Хәрӯн ар-Рашӣд.

Wasling/confluence

If a word preceding the article ends on a vowel, this vowel replaces the **а** of the article (so called *wasling*, or confluence). The two dashes are used: фӣ-л-байән.

Denoting hamzah and 'ayn

Hamzah before a word is omitted, and is shown only in the middle and at the end of a word by an apostrophe in the form of a usual comma (looks like 9): Баха'. 'Аyn, in any position, is denoted with the upturned apostrophe (or left single quotation mark, looks like 6): 'Ахð. Examples: 'Абд ал-Фадл Гулпайгәнӣ; Ка'ба.

Izafet

This term, in classical Persian, means the letter **î** joined to the end of a word, pointing that the next word is the definition of the first. If the previous word ends on vowel (but not *hamzah*!), then before the *izafet* additional [й] appears: Китāб-и Йқāн, Китāб-и Ақдас, Сӯра-йи Хайкал.

Terminal л

It is decided that we will write the soft sign after the terminal л.

Double [дждж] will be written as [джж]

Declensions

We will follow the rules of Russian grammar. The details may be found in Rosental's *Dictionary of the Difficulties of Russian Language* («Словарь трудностей русского языка» Розенталя), and also there is a number of telephone services. In Moscow, call 230-66-33, or email to mail@rusyaz.ru (one request is 30 roubles), or visit <http://www.spravka.gramota.ru/>; there is also such a service in St. Petersburg as well.

If a word ends on the long vowel (that is, the diacritical sign is used), this vowel is omitted, and the appropriate Russian ending is used instead: *mīrzā* — *mīrзе* — *mīрзой*.

Абдул-Баха is not declined.

Transliteration in languages other than Russian

It is suggested that Belarus and Ukraine can change и in the transliteration system fori, and have other modifications, if they wish.

Phonetics

The guidelines for the pronunciation of transliterated Arabic and Persian words will be developed; it will be included in *Introduction* to all the Bahá'í books published by the *Edineniye* Publishing Trust (at least, for some time). It is also to be made known to all the Bahá'ís using Cyrillic alphabets, through the national Bahá'í bulletins.

Limitations of Usage and Recommendations for Implementation

Transliteration is to be used in all publications, as the technical aspects of the system are understood by the friends. This includes the general correspondence between the Bahá'í institutions.

Transliteration is not to be used in the fields and applications, where it's implementations is technically difficult, such as in electronic databases and in the Internet, where it is essential to be able to conduct the electronic search. System for transliteration in these fields will be developed later. The main requirement for it will be the absence of symbols other than basic Latin and basic Cyrillic; also, the easy visual reading will not be a priority.

Fonts containing the necessary glyphs have to be distributed among all the institutions. This will ensure the correct representation of transliterated words in the documents supporting Unicode, or having other means of showing different fonts, like XML, HTML, RTF, MS Office etc. In order to insure the correct representation of a document on all computers, it is suggested to distribute them in Adobe PDF format. PDF files may be produced using full version of Adobe Acrobat, or a number of free applications.