

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE
DEPARTMENT OF THE SECRETARIAT

27 July 2021

Transmitted by email: _____

Mr. Michael Thomas
Australia

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

The Universal House of Justice received your email letter of 12 April 2021 stating that you have been editing the draft of “_____ on *The Promised Day Is Come*” by Dr. _____ and noting what you feel may be errors in the book *The Promised Day Is Come*. We have been asked to respond as follows.

Kindly note that, in accordance with longstanding policy, while a study guide may quote passages, and even cite extensively from any of the Bahá'í Writings or works of the Guardian, the work itself should not be printed in full within, or as an appendix to, a study guide. Also, no changes can be introduced into the text of the work without the specific approval of the House of Justice in every instance.

You will be interested to know that some differences in wording that occur in various editions of *The Promised Day Is Come* are due to the fact that, when the United States Publishing Trust was preparing the 1980 edition of this work for publication, the text was proofread against the Guardian's original typescript and changes were made to bring the printed text into conformity with that typescript. While you appear to have used the first printing of the 1980 edition, in later printings some corrections were made, including the date of the statement prepared by Shoghi Effendi for the United Nations Special Palestine Committee. Additionally, paragraph numbers were assigned to the work; these differ slightly from the numbers in the document you enclosed. The punctuation of ellipses used in the printed book follows *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

With respect to your comments about issues of transliteration, including the use of the letter “v” for the Persian and Arabic letter “váv” and the spelling of words such as “Sulaymáníyyih”, the Research Department at the Bahá'í World Centre has previously stated that the system adopted by Shoghi Effendi is a transliteration system, not a method of representing the pronunciation of the words in the orthography of a European language. From the fact that Persian uses the Arabic alphabet (with minor adaptations) it is fortunately possible to use this transliteration system for both Arabic and Persian words, which greatly simplifies the matter for Bahá'ís, in whose Scriptures both languages are inextricably intertwined. In certain instances there is a difference in the way a transliterated word will appear, depending upon whether it is transliterated from the Arabic or the Persian. However, the symbol used to transliterate the Arabic letter “váv” when it is used as a consonant is “v”. The “w” is reserved for transliterating its use in the diphthong “aw”. It should be borne in mind that throughout his transliterations the Guardian gave the Persian pronunciation of Arabic words, e.g., “Bahíyyih”

not “Bahíyyah”. The information you provided about the missing diacritical marks in the electronic text of *The Promised Day Is Come* has been referred to the appropriate department so that the missing marks may be applied to the text on the Bahá’í Reference Library.

With respect to what you refer to as “hybrid plurals”, it is common practice, even in academic works, to use, as the Guardian chose to do, the English ending *-s* for the plural of transliterated foreign terms such as “mullás”. Many such terms have become so common that they are listed in English dictionaries. Yet dictionaries and style guides are not repositories of fixed rules but are continually revised to reflect changing practice as writers and speakers shape language in order to fit their specific communicative needs and preferences. For example, Shoghi Effendi departed from the dictionary form in deciding to use the transliterated spelling “Qur’án” instead of the established spelling “Koran”, which is still the first variant listed in *The Oxford English Dictionary*. In the case of the “Súrih of Joseph” and the “Súrih of Kings”, he chose to transliterate the Arabic word consistently with the system he had adopted rather than use a spelling based on a different system.

The casing of words often varies according to the preference of the writer. Although the word “Shah” was once normally capitalized, but is now more commonly lowercased, the capitalized form is still found in some recent academic works. The spelling of “Áqá Muḥammad Khán” is not incorrect; “Áqá” is an acceptable variant which is found in scholarly literature, while the word “Muḥammadan” was commonly used in literature in the past. The House of Justice feels that differences in style or usage that are accountable to the norms of different eras should not be regarded as errors in need of correction.

Rest assured of the prayers of the House of Justice at the Sacred Threshold that your efforts in the path of service to the Cause of God may be blessed and confirmed.

With loving Bahá’í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

cc: National Assembly of Australia