



# A Guide to TRANSLITERATION

*Islamic Studies Policy*

Sher Nowrooz Khan

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## Foreword

This book is an invaluable guide of transliteration for researches, authors, scholars and others interested in Islamic literature in oriental languages. Transliteration is required for those languages which do not have Latin alphabets. Various transliteration policies are used in different organizations, universities and research institutions in the World. The guide in hand prepared by Mr. Sher Nowrooz Khan, is the transliteration policy of *Islamic Studies* (a research journal), which has been devised by Islamic Research Institute, International Islamic University, Islamabad. This policy is considered one of the best transliteration policies in the world. The importance of transliteration policy for oriental languages can hardly be over emphasized. Without a proper transliteration policy it is very difficult for scholars and researchers to write books, articles and make citations of sources of oriental languages into English language.

The author has divided the guide into five parts. The first part covers the transliteration of words and proper names of Arabic, Persian, and Urdu; the second part contains the transliteration of titles of famous Arabic books; the third part provides the transliteration of titles of representative Persian and Urdu books; the fourth part explains *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th edition (Notes and bibliography); the fifth part explains the scholarly abbreviations of *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

Mr. Sher Nowrooz Khan, Chief Librarian, International Islamic University Islamabad has been writing books and compiling bibliographies and indexes on a variety of subjects to assist and facilitate researchers. The present work is the continuation of this ongoing effort. He has done a commendable work and has made a rigorous effort to make this reference tool useful for those who would like to do authentic transliteration.

**Prof. Dr. Muhammad Munir**

Professor of Law  
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## Preface

Transliteration is the conversion of a text from one language to another. In transliteration, each character of the source language is given a specific character in the targeted language. In almost all transliteration policies diacritical marks are used. It is customary to transliterate the works of those languages that do not use the Latin alphabet. These languages include Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Chinese, Hebrew, Japanese, Russian and other living languages as well as ancient languages such as Greek and Sanskrit.

There is no universally accepted uniform policy for transliteration. Many universities, libraries, research journals and publishing firms have devised and used their own formulae. Some popular transliteration policies are of American Library Association (ALA), Library of Congress (LC), *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, *Arab Law Quarterly*, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, etc.

The present guide focuses on the transliteration policy of *Islamic Studies* (a research journal), which has been devised by Islamic Research Institute, International Islamic University, Islamabad. The guide consists of five parts. The first part contains the transliteration of words and proper names of Arabic, Persian, and Urdu; the second part provides the transliteration of titles of famous Arabic books; the third part provides the transliteration of titles of representative Persian and Urdu books; the fourth part explains *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th edition (Notes and bibliography); the

fifth part explains the scholarly abbreviations of *The Chicago Manual of Style*. To elucidate the transliteration policy of *Islamic Studies* some specific rules could be set down here.

1. ال is transliterated as (al-) whether it is followed by a *shamsī* (sun) or *qamarī* (moon) letter, e.g., التين ، الرحمن (al-Raḥmān, al-Tīn, al-Shams), القمر ، الحديث ، القضاة (al-Qudāh, al-Ḥadīth, al-Qamar). Moreover, in construct form ال is transliterated as ('l-) e.g., أبو العباس ، والنظائر (Abū 'l-'Abbās, al-Ashbāh wa 'l-Nazā'ir).
2. ء (ء), when it appears at the middle or end of a word, is transliterated as elevated comma (') but is not expressed when *hamzah* is used at the beginning, e.g. تاريخ (Ta'rikh, al-Ra'ūf, al-Mu'min, al-'Ulamā', al-Nisā', Akram, Irshād, Ustādh).
3. ع is transliterated as elevated inverted comma (') e.g., إجماع ، أعلام ، عاقل (Āqil, A'lām, Ijmā').
4. ض as an Arabic letter is transliterated as (ḍ), and as a Persian/Urdu letter is transliterated as (ẓ), e.g. ضعيف (Ẓāmindār, Ẓarōrat), ضرورت ، ضامن دار (Ḍiyā' al-Dīn, Ḍa'if), ضياء الدين (Ḍiyā' al-Dīn, Ḍa'if).
5. و as an Arabic letter is transliterated as (w), e.g. تنوير (Tanwīr) and as a Persian/Urdu letter is transliterated as (v) e.g., جاويد (Jāva'id).
6. و as an Arabic conjunction is transliterated as (wa), e.g., القرآن والحديث (al-Qur'ān wa 'l-Ḥadīth, Al-Ashbāh wa 'l-Nazā'ir) and as a Persian/Urdu letter is



transliterated as (-o) e.g., فکرونظر ، تعلیم و تربیت (Ta'lim-o Tarbiyat, Fikr-o Nazar).

7. ة is transliterated as (ah) in pause form and as (at) in construct form, e.g. العمدة , المدينة , السيرة (al-Sīrah, al-Madīnah, al-'Umdah), عمدة الفقه , مدينة الرسول (Madīnat al-Rasūl, 'Umdat al-Fiqh).
8. The *shaddah* ( ّ ) and the consonant it qualifies should be transliterated as a double consonant, e.g., مصنف , محمد (Muḥammad, Muṣannaf).
9. The median alif ( ا ) which occurs in such names, as الله , إسماعيل , إبراهيم , should be transliterated as Allāh, Ibrāhīm, Ismā'īl.
10. When the vowels ( ا ) and ( و ) have no phonetic function, as in عمرو , فعلوا , they would not be transliterated, such as عمرو (Amr, Fa'alū).
11. Long vowels are transliterated as ā (ā), ī (ī), ū (ū), Urdu (ō), Urdu (ē), e.g., الكرسي , الأبنار , آثار , أبو حامد (Āthār, al-Abṣār, al-Kursī, Abū Ḥāmid, روى , پيارے , Rō'ī, Piyārē).
12. Short vowels are transliterated as (a), (i), (u) e.g., اسلم , شمله , كُرد (Aslam, Shimlah, Kurd).
13. Short vowel in Persian/Urdu adjectival or possessive form is transliterated as (-i), e.g., آئين اكبرى , حب رسول (Ā'in-i Akbarī, Ḥubb-i Rasūl).
14. A diphthong is a combination of two vowel sounds occurring next to each other within the same syllable.

There are two diphthongs in Arabic and Urdu/Persian i.e., و, wāw and ي, yā. When a wāw or yā has *sukun* over it, the sound is diphthong. Examples of Arabic:

لَيْلَة، بَيْت (laylah, bayt), and نَوْم، نَوْم (yawm, nawm).

Examples of Urdu: کون، شوہر (main, hain) and میں، مین (shauhar, kaun).

Dr Faizan-ur-Rahman, Associate Professor, Faculty of Arabic, IIU and Mr Muhammad Islam, Lecturer/Research Associate, Islamic Research Institute, IIU are to be complimented and thanked for editing and providing considerable guidance to make the work useful. Mrs Zahida Ahmad is thanked for her beautiful cover design. Mr Tufail Hussain Jadoon is thanked for the final type-setting and formatting of the text.

I hope this guide will serve as a useful reference tool for those engaged in research to ensure correct transliteration. Best possible efforts have been made in transliterating Arabic, Urdu and Persian characters into Latin characters as per policy followed by *Islamic Studies*. However, researchers who find any error or have a useful comment or suggestion to make, should not hesitate to communicate with me. Such input will be gratefully appreciated for improving on any subsequent edition of this work.

**Sher Nowrooz Khan**

