

M E M O R A N D U M

To: The Universal House of Justice

Date: 3 October 1991

From: The Research Department

Yá 'Alíyyu'l-A'lá

In her e-mail message of 2 September 1991, ... has written to ask about the meaning and correct transliteration of "Yá 'Alíyyu'l-A'lá" and where it can be found. She also asks if it is an invocation to the Báb.

The Research Department has located the invocation "Yá 'Alíyyu'l-A'lá" in two places. It appears in a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá on page 312 of "Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá" (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1982), and in a letter of the beloved Guardian found in "Messages to the Bahá'í World, 1950-1957" (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1971), page 153. The spelling used by the Guardian is given above, and accords with the system of transliteration which he established (found in any volume of "The Bahá'í World"). We note that the rendering printed in "Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá" contains a misplaced inverted comma.

The translation of "Yá 'Alíyyu'l-A'lá", as rendered by Shoghi Effendi in 1921 when he translated the above mentioned Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, is "O Thou Most High".¹ We note that in his letter of 1953, also referenced above, he chose to leave "Yá 'Alíyyu'l-A'lá" in the original language, as did the Universal House of Justice when they later published the Master's Tablet in "Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá".

In Islamic tradition, *al-'Ali*, "The Most High One", is one of the names of God.² Thus, a Muslim might use "Yá 'Alíyyu'l-A'lá" to call upon God. However, in Bábí and Bahá'í tradition, especially as 'Alí was the Báb's name, "Yá 'Alíyyu'l-A'lá" is understood to be an invocation to the Báb.

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1. See "Star of the West", vol. 12, no. 13, 4 November 1921, p. 229.
 2. See Robert Stade, "Ninety-Nine Names of God in Islam", a translation of the major portion of Al-Ghazálí's "Al-Maqṣad Al-Asná" (Ibadan, Nigeria: Daystar Press, 1970), pp. 72-75.

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

BAHÁ'Í WORLD CENTRE

Department of the Secretariat

3 October 1991

Mrs. ...
Bahá'í World Centre

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

The Universal House of Justice referred to the Research Department your request of 2 September 1991 concerning the invocation "Yá 'Alíyyu'l-A'lá". We are now sending you the enclosed copy of the memorandum prepared in response.

It is hoped that a study of this material will provide the enlightenment you have sought.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Ethna Archibald

For Department of the Secretariat

Enclosure

Return-Path: [redacted]
Date: Mon, 2 Sep 91 11:46:23+0300
From: [redacted]
To: Research
Subject: A personal request

Dear Friends,

I would like to know if you have a source for information regarding the following invocation to the Bab (?) which I have been unable to find in any of the lists of transliterated terms in Bahá'í World volumes, in the Basic Bahá'í Dictionary, or in any of the Bahá'í Glossaries in our office and it is not listed in the Concordances as far as I have been able to determine:

Ye 'Alíyyu'l-'Alá

or Ye 'Alí ul-'Alá

translated as "O Thou Exalted One, the Most Exalted".

Is this an invocation to the Bab? What is the correct transliteration?
What is the correct translation?

If you have information about this invocation, and published or unpublished references to it, please share them with me.

Thank you very much.