



ABU'L-FAẒL GOLPĀYEGĀNĪ

ABU'L-FAẒL (or **ABU'L-FAẒĀ'EL**) **GOLPĀYEGĀNĪ**, MĪRZĀ MOḤAMMAD, prominent Baha'i scholar and apologist. He was born in Jomādā II, 1260/June-July, 1844 in Golpāyegān, the son of Mīrzā Moḥammad-Rezā Šarī'atmadār. After studying traditional Islamic sciences at Karbalā, Najaf, and Isfahan, he proceeded, in October, 1873 to Tehran, where he soon became head of Madrasa-ye Ḥakīm Hāšem, also known as Madrasa-ye Madār-e Šāh.

After his conversion to the Baha'i faith in September, 1876, Abu'l-Faẓl was dismissed from his post and imprisoned for five months. He then became secretary to Mānakjī Šāḥeb, the Zoroastrian agent, and was involved in the production of the *Tārīḳ-e jadīd* (of Mīrzā Ḥosayn Hamadānī, tr. E. G. Browne, Cambridge, 1893; see pp. xxxiii-xlii). In December, 1882, together with numerous other Baha'is of Tehran, Abu'l-Faẓl was arrested. He was interrogated repeatedly and imprisoned for twenty-two months and again for six months before being released in February, 1886. Thereupon he began a series of journeys to promote the Baha'i faith, visiting Qom, Kāšān, Isfahan, Yazd, Tabrīz, Hamadān, and Kermānšāh. In July, 1888, he went to 'Ešqābād and later to Samarqand and Bokhara, where he discovered the only extant manuscript of *Ḥodūd al-ālam* (see *Ḥodūd al-ālam*, tr. Minorsky, pp. xlii-xliii). In 1894 he spent ten months in Acre meeting 'Abd-al-Bahā', who then sent him to Egypt, where he succeeded in converting a number of students of al-Azhar. Between 1900 and 1904, he traveled to Paris and the United States, where his writings and talks enabled the nascent American Baha'i community to obtain a clearer understanding of their faith. He then lived in Egypt and Beirut until his



death in Cairo on 24 Šafar 1332/21 January 1914.

Abu'l-Faẓl's biographers agree on his profound learning, especially in philosophy and religious history, his exceptional mastery of the Persian language, his skill in debate, the simplicity of his life, and his great personal humility.

Works: 1. *Ketāb al-farā'ed* (Cairo, 1315/1898) is the best known and generally reckoned to be the most important work of Abu'l-Faẓl. It is written in defense of the Baha'i faith and refutes an attack on Bahā'allāh's *Ketāb-e iqān* by the Šayḵ-al-eslām of Tiflis. 2-3. *Šarḥ-e āyāt-e mowarraka* and *Resāla-ye Ayyūbiya*, both written in 1305/1888 and published together (Shanghai, 1344/1925), dealing with questions on Jewish prophecy. 4. *Dorar al-bahiya* (Cairo, ca. 1317/1899), written in Arabic in 1316/1898. 5. *Ḥoǰaj al-bahiya*, written in 1901-02 for the American Baha'is. English translation by Ishtael-ebn-Kalenter ('Alī-qolī Khan), *The Behai Proofs*, New York, 1902; text printed in Egypt, 1342/1925. 6. *Borhān-e lāme'*, a reply to the attack of Rev. P. Z. Easton; text and English translation, Chicago, 1912. 7-8. *Majmū'a-ye rasā'el-e ḥazrat-e Abi'l-Fazā'el* (Cairo, 1339/1920) and *Rasā'el va raqā'em* (ed. R. Meḥrābkānī, Tehran, 134 Badī'/1977), two collections of letters and other writings. 9. *Moktārāt men mo'allafāt Abi'l-Faẓl*, Brussels, 1980, a compilation of some of Abu'l-Faẓl's Arabic works. A number of the works of Abu'l-Faẓl remain unpublished.

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